5-1996

Portraits of Progress in New South Appalachia: Three Expositions in Knoxville, Tennessee, 1910-1913

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Robert Douglas Lukens entitled "Portraits of Progress in New South Appalachia: Three Expositions in Knoxville, Tennessee, 1910-1913." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.

Susan Becker, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

William Bruce Wheeler, Beth Haiken

Accepted for the Council:
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Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Accepted for the Council:

C. W. Minkel

Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

Portraits of Progress in New South Appalachia: Three Expositions in Knoxville, Tennessee, 1910-1913

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Robert Douglas Lukens
May 1996

Acknowledgements

There are a number of people whose efforts and knowledge made this manuscript possible. I would like to thank all of the staff at the University of Tennessee's Special Collections department and the McClung Center of the East Tennessee Historical Society. I am also indebted to Dr. Bruce Wheeler and Dr. Beth Haiken for their helpful suggestions and insights into this project. Most of all, I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Susan Becker for her guidance. She is both a great historian and great teacher.

Abstract

The following work is an examination of three expositions held in Knoxville, TN: The Appalachian Expositions of 1910 and 1911 and the National Conservation Exposition in 1913. World's fairs were ubiquitous across the United States at the turn of the century, but these were the first to be held in the southern Appalachian region. Expositions reflect the cultural values of those involved in their establishment. Thus, they provide a rare opportunity for the historian to examine society in a condensed time frame. Although this method has been applied to other expositions at other times, it has yet to be applied to southern Appalachia.

The goal of this thesis is to ascertain the messages of each of these fairs. From an extensive examination of available source material, it is clear that each one of these three expositions attempted to apply the "New South" vision of economic and cultural uplift to the southern Appalachian region. The two Appalachian Expositions attempted to combat local problems, such as racism and perceived backwardness, with progressive displays and oratory. Although they were quite similar, the second of these affairs became more conservative as the social elite of Knoxville took control of the event to prevent the deterioration of a highly stratified social order. The 1913 National Conservation Exposition was designed to be a national affair which narrowed its focus to the crucial issue of conservation: the efficient and responsible exploitation of the nation's resources. In practice, however, this fair differed little from its predecessors; it preached essentially the same New South message, with a few minor modifications. The immediate effects of the expositions were favorable: profit, publicity and local enthusiasm. The ultimate New South goals of the ventures, however, were never realized.

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Introduction

"The white city...., the hum of industry...., the stately buildings, the tents of many kinds, colors, and shapes" all made quite an impression on Mrs. Cynthia Linden Sterling, a visitor from Los Angeles to the 1910 Appalachian Exposition in Knoxville, Tennessee.[1] Although a visit from such distance was atypical, Mrs. Sterling's detailed description of the Chilhowee Park fairgrounds provides a portrait of the fair. Set in the idyllic foothills of the Appalachian mountains, the fair site combined easy road access with picturesque lakefront vistas where one could "rest [and] read the daily bulletins" in solitude.[2] For the more adventuresome, the exposition's Midway offered, among other exciting things, Heckler's Flea Circus and Charlie Mullhall's Wild West Show.[3] Further up from the Midway stood the Woman's Building, which attested to "the high place she fills in the world's thought, life and action."[4] The agricultural display provided a wide variety of fine vegetable, cereal, and fruit samples. Mrs. Sterling may have also been enthralled by the sight of dirigible balloons and aeroplanes wafting in the skies. And, after a long day soaking in the sights of the exposition, she had

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[1] "Los Angeles Woman's Impression of the Appalachian Exposition," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 27 September 1910. 7.

[2] Ibid

[3] "Interesting. Novel and Thrilling Features of the Midway Jungle." *The Journal and Tribune*. 1 September 1910. 11.

[4] "Los Angeles Woman's..."

the rare opportunity to view a spectacular fireworks display complete with "asteroid rockets, Halley's comet, radium flashes, spider web wheels and 'popping' corn in the clouds."[5]

The first Appalachian Exposition, like its 1911 successor and the 1913 National Conservation Exposition, must have been quite a spectacle for southern Appalachian residents and visitors from afar. But beneath the sights, sounds, and smells of these three fairs, a deeper message existed, one of crucial import. These fairs preached what was perceived as the salvation of the South: the "New South" dream of economic prosperity and cultural enrichment. Although other expositions of a similar nature were held across the nation in this time period, these were the first to be held in the southern Appalachian region.

Works such as Robert Rydell's *All the World's a Fair* and Alan Trachtenberg's *The Incorporation of America* have shown that, for the historian, expositions mirror cultural values and societal traits and reflect how a society wants to be perceived by the outside world.[6] Therefore, they can be used to explore the attitudes of the region they portray in a condensed time frame. This method has yet to be applied to the southern Appalachian region. The Appalachian Expositions and the National Conservation Exposition provide windows into the New South and valuable information which may change or affirm previous views about the region's history. In this thesis, I will answer the following questions: What were the messages of each fair, how were they promulgated, and what is their relationship to the New South ideology?

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[5] "To-day's Official Program of the Appalachian Exposition," The Journal and Tribune, 19 September 1910, 10.

[6] Robert Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions 1876-1916* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (NY: Hill and Wang, 1982).

The function of each one of these fairs was to impose uniform standards of behavior on people according to their place in society in an attempt to cure society's ills and create a New South. Civic cooperation, industrialization, modernization, agricultural efficiency, and well-defined roles for women and blacks were vital parts of the utopian New South vision. Each exposition operated in a different way, but their messages revolved around this central theme of societal transformation.

The 1910 and 1911 Appalachian Expositions both reflected and promoted New South ideals, particularly in their application to Knoxville and the surrounding region. Through this promotion, progressives confronted a number of obstacles. The first of these was the tendency of conservative Knoxvillian businessmen and individualistic urban in-migrant highlanders to resist the changes, such as higher taxes and government regulation, that were necessary to bring about the New South in southern Appalachia. Second, racial tensions between working class whites and local African-Americans threatened the New South ideal of racial harmony. Third, those who remained in the upcountry, perceived as ignorant and backward, had to be drawn out of isolation and into their industrious New South role. Also, by having separate departments for women and blacks, the fair reinforced traditional boundaries. Yet both of these groups realized significant gains as a result of their efforts within their own "spheres".

The structure and general New South message of the 1911 Appalachian exposition was almost identical to its predecessor. Beneath the surface of the displays and oratory, however, the nature of the 1911 exposition appears slightly more conservative. An interesting transformation seems to have occurred in the upper ranks of the exposition officials, which contributed to and

reflects this shift. In general, in 1911, a more moderate progressive management replaced the relatively liberal progressive leadership of the 1910 exposition. This shift is also reflected in the political ideologies of those prominent individuals who delivered addresses at the fairs. The main orators at the 1910 fair were Republicans while those of 1911 were Democrats. Although there were progressives and conservatives in both parties at that time, in the South the Democratic party was associated with more traditional views than the Republican party. Furthermore, the content of some 1911 addresses included very conservative "Old South" glorifications of the Confederacy. Other indications of this transformation include changes within the 1911 Women's Congress of the Women's Department and the general absence of radical oratory in 1911. Why did such a shift occur? It is probable that the more conservative citizens of Knoxville wanted both to reap the financial and publicity benefits of the exposition, and to contain it to ensure the preservation of a stratified social order.

The National Conservation Exposition in 1913 served the same purpose as the two previous fairs: to impose uniform New South standards of behavior according to one's place in society. At first glance, with its broader national scope and narrower topical focus, this exposition seems to be an entirely different kind of affair. The National Conservation Exposition did promote, through exhibits and oratory, conservation's benefits for the nation and, particularly, the entire South. Conservation, however, was a concept manipulated to promote Knoxville, the southern Appalachian region, and New South roles for black and white men, women, and children for the third time. There were a few alterations in the fair's exhibits because it took place in a slightly different milieu from the preceding events. But the media and officials

themselves continued to use the fair as a way to promote the New South in the area and as a means of attracting investment to Knoxville and the region: local groups, businesses, and even preachers twisted the concept's meaning to meet their own ends.

This thesis relies heavily upon newspaper coverage for information concerning the fairs. This would be problematic if absolute veracity was attributed to such articles. But I use them, first of all, to discover general information about the fairs, related information about participants, and published addresses. A second equally important function the newspapers serve is as providers of information about perceptions of and reactions to the fairs and their messages. People base their daily decisions and actions on what they perceive to be reality. Thus, the fairs and their messages shaped and were shaped by the perceptions of those that came into contact with them. The most accurate reflection of this interplay can be found in Knoxville's newspapers, most notably *The Journal and Tribune* and *The Knoxville Sentinel*. Although *The Knoxville Sentinel* had Democratic political affiliations and *The Journal and Tribune* was created through a merger of Democratic and Republican newspapers, the two showed little difference of opinion about the fairs and their messages.[7]

In order to examine each of these fairs, the first section of this work sets the events in a number of contexts. A discussion of the similarities between the two Appalachian expositions follows. The differences between the two fairs are analyzed and the next section describes the structure and nature of the National Conservation Exposition. Finally, a conclusion ties the inquiry together and shows the results of the expositions' efforts.

[7] Lucile Deadrick, ed., *Heart of the Valley: A History of Knox County, TN* (Knoxville: East Tennessee Historical Society, 1976), 661.

So it is perceptions which have shaped the format of this manuscript. The two Appalachian Expositions are grouped together because they were perceived as the same event. The National Conservation Exposition is discussed alone because it was seen as something different by fair participants. This is the most effective way to extract information and meaning out of the events. To study all three separately and in the same manner would result in redundancy. For instance, the last chapter mostly ignores the question of the conservatism or dynamism of the National Conservation Exposition because the best way to demonstrate those forces at work is in the underlying differences between the two Appalachian Expositions. Also, some elements of the expositions which may at first seem insignificant, such as fireworks or pageants, are included in this study because even the most superficial aspects of the fairs had deep symbolic meaning. Analyzing them demonstrates the pervasive nature of New South boosterism in the expositions.

Terms such as conservative, progressive, and radical have ambiguous meanings which must be strictly defined to avoid any misunderstandings. Conservatism is used to refer to a mind-set that is, in general, opposed to any fundamental social, cultural, or economic change. In this study, the term Progressivism or progressive reform denotes a forward-looking desire to change society for what was perceived as the public good; in this case, that good was the creation of a New South. Some historians call progressive reform conservative. But by this they mean that it was used as a means of social control and was not revolutionary. This definition is not used in this thesis. For instance, in this study, prohibition is viewed as a progressive reform and opposition to it is considered conservative because temperance by law was viewed as a piece of a grander scheme for social betterment through change.

When something is called radical, it means that that person or doctrine was rejected by mainstream America because they or it called for far-reaching change which was deemed unacceptable, even to most progressives. A few examples of this are socialism, women's suffrage, unionization, and black suffrage.

In 1886, Henry Grady, young editor of the Atlanta *Constitution*, delivered a monumental speech to the New England Society of New York. In powerful oratory, Grady declared that the South was on the verge of greatness. A new era was at hand in which a "New South" would emerge from the ashes of the Civil War and turmoil of Reconstruction. Many southerners adopted Grady's creed and believed that the post-Reconstruction South was destined for industrial and agricultural prosperity. As described by historians C.Vann Woodward, George Brown Tindall, and Edward L. Ayres, the New South vision involved shedding the stigmas of slavery, poverty, dependence on the North, cultural backwardness, and monoculture while imitating - even surpassing - northern economic prosperity. Economically, this involved the industrial development of natural resources, the improvement of farming techniques, and the diversification of agriculture. The rise of the southern cotton mill best demonstrates New South industry. Instead of sending cotton north for processing, southerners created their own processing plants to profit from each step of production and become more self-sufficient. The cultural and social aspects of the New South were marked by a desire to reform society through the promotion of morality, humanitarianism, democracy (for whites only), better education, and efficiency; increased government intervention and regulation

would bring about these changes.[8]

In an age of increasing discrimination, disfranchisement, and segregation, the New South vision had a place for southern African Americans. Booker T. Washington, black educator and leader, personified the model New South African American living in harmony with but separate from whites. In an epochal address delivered to the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, Washington proclaimed what came to be called the "Atlanta Compromise." Blacks were urged to strive for advances through industrial education and the economic opportunities available to them, but were warned not to challenge the political structure which excluded them. The compromise consisted of sacrificing enfranchisement and basic constitutional rights for gradual advancement. Black institutions, such as the Tuskegee Institute founded by Washington in 1881, taught and practiced this philosophy.[9] Yet Washington's beliefs did not go unchallenged. The first African-American Ph.D., W.E.B. Du Bois, voiced an opinion at the turn of the century which opposed gradual integration. Instead, Du Bois claimed, blacks should challenge the white power structure which stifled the civil rights of African Americans.[10]

According to southern Progressivism, women played a crucial role in the New South by upholding society's morals through activities in the home, church, and community. Women were expected to teach their children proper principles so that they would lead future generations in a respectable and

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[8] George Brown Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945*, A History of the South, vol. 10 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University and The Littlefield Fund for Southern History of the University of Texas, 1967); Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 20; C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*, A History of the South vol. 9 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University and the Littlefield Fund for Southern History of the University of Texas. 1951). 356-358.

[9] Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, 322-325.

[10] Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 367, 368.

patriotic manner. Occupations outside the home, such as nursing or teaching, were viewed as important contributions to the public welfare but, for most, only as temporary positions before marriage. New South women worked in local clubs or organizations designed to uplift society. Through vehicles such as city beautiful leagues and anti-vice organizations, women shaped New South society. They battled alcoholism and the oppression it entailed through the Women's Christian Temperance Union and local Anti-Saloon leagues. On a grander scale, alcohol consumption was viewed as a problem which held the South back by fostering idleness and poor work ethics.[11] Finally, although it was considered radical, some women of the South began to embrace women's suffrage. The enfranchisement of women was not part of the role allotted to women in the New South, but many challenged the notion that politics was a masculine venture through suffrage organizations and protests.

The movement to create a New South was, however, far from monolithic. Some emphasized social reform while others focused their efforts on the development of natural resources. Some of these programs, such as child-labor reform and massive industrialization to catch up with the North, were at odds with each other. Historian Dewey Grantham addresses this ambivalence about the exact nature and structure of the New South world in his *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (1983). Southern Progressivism differed from Progressivism elsewhere in its attempt to retain the South's bucolic rural image and strong heritage while also adopting modernization policies.[12] In other words, it attempted to have the best of both worlds for the South.

Problems arose when it became clear that some southerners favored the

[11] Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, 29, 77, 181

[12] Dewey W. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1983), xv-xvii.

growth part of this creed while others favored the tradition side. Still others rejected change of any kind. "The Divided Mind of the New South," as C. Vann Woodward calls this dilemma, impeded the realization of the New South dream. Woodward's purveyors of a "New Order" in the South consisted of a rising middle class of professionals and capitalist industrialists. Lawyers, professors, mill operators, and journalists like Henry Grady preached unlimited growth with little concern for its effects on southern heritage. The reaction from many of the South's well-established elite was an adherence to the "Old Order" based on traditional patterns of conservative business practices and paternalistic social control. This struggle to retain an elite system manifested itself in the "Lost Cause" movement of the 1890s, a glorification and romanticization of the old Confederacy. These years witnessed the erection of countless war monuments across the South and the organization of the United Confederate Veterans and United Daughters of the Confederacy. Some newspapers carried reminiscent vignettes of patriotic wartime experiences. Many churches became bulwarks against the new order, warning people of avarice, materialism, and other "perils of the New South".[13] New South critics, such as Virginia Confederate veteran Robert L. Dabney, rose to defend a traditional society against the rising tide of industrial progress with their rhetorical opposition to efficiency, modernization, and free competition in the South.[14]

Many of these trends are apparent in the growth of Knoxville. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the future looked quite bright for the young city. With an extensive railroad system, rich natural resources, a booming wholesale business, and an ample labor supply, the city was in the perfect position to become the model New South city. A massive population influx, mostly

[13] Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 162, 172.
[14] Ibid., 155, 156, 173, 174.

Appalachian whites and southern blacks, fueled the town's industry.[15] Politically, Knoxville's progressives allied themselves with the local Republican party. This is most adequately demonstrated through the Republicans' successful campaign for prohibition within city limits in 1907. Local Democrats, led by mayor Samuel G. Heiskell, formed the bulwark of opposition to prohibition [16]

But the first years of the twentieth century ushered in a much bleaker decade. Knoxville's population growth rate dropped to a relatively low 11.7 percent between 1900 and 1910 due to emigration. Blacks fled because of political alienation, job scarcity, and poor relations with whites. Emigration from the area even became an issue at the expositions when a heated debate erupted over whether or not railroads could put up displays which beckoned exposition visitors West. Also, business leaders seemed to have traded their audacity for conservatism, opting for quick profits over long-term economic growth.[17] Contemporaries recognized this problem: local businessman William J. Oliver complained that instead of building up the community with local investments, the business elite "lean toward outside investments that promise get-rich-quick dividends."[18] Michael J. McDonald's and William Bruce Wheeler's *Knoxville, Tennessee: Continuity and Change in an Appalachian City* indicates that a degree of social polarization occurred; the elite of Knoxville became increasingly conservative and drifted away from the economic, social, and political issues of the time. Suburbanization was both a main contributor and physical manifestation of this aloofness as those who could afford it moved

[15] Michael J. McDonald and William Bruce Wheeler, *Knoxville, Tennessee: Continuity and Change in an Appalachian City* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 12-22.
[16] Ibid., 35, 36.
[17] Ibid., 34, 35; "An Echo of the Exposition," *The Journal and Tribune*, 3 October 1911, 12.
[18] William M. Goodman, ed., "Talks About Knoxville", *The Knoxville Market Annual* (Knoxville, TN. Knoxville Printing and Box Co., 1909), no page number.

away from downtown Knoxville.[19] The community spirit needed for the creation of the New South was nowhere to be found.

Underlying social ills rose to the surface. Appalachian highlander in-migrants refused to compromise their independence for the general welfare of the region. Remnants of Appalachian individualism, along with the conservatism of the social elite, spawned resistance to the taxes and investments needed to promote further growth.[20]

Appalachian "otherness" was not openly acknowledged until 1873 with the advent of the local color movement, a literary fascination with the backcountry. Out of this movement came literature which stressed the novelty of Appalachia as a "strange land" of "peculiar people".[21] In the last decade of the nineteenth century, however, the image of southern Appalachia changed in the American mind from an area of novelty to an obstacle to national unity because of its isolation and perceived backwardness. As a result, philanthropic organizations such as the Protestant home missions and settlement schools attempted to teach highlanders proper "American" values and attitudes. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a fusion of the novelty and obstruction images occurred in the minds of middle class Americans. Appalachian peculiarity became an asset with enormous potential. Highlanders were praised for their retention of racial purity and consanguinity to the nation's founding fathers, in contrast to the immigrant-saturated Northeast. This tendency to focus on genetic purity was fostered by the doctrine of Social Darwinism which was based on a belief in the inherited racial superiority of certain groups of people over others. Harnessing that superiority through

[19] McDonald and Wheeler, *Knoxville, Tennessee*, 35, 36.
[20] Ibid., 26-48.
[21] Henry D. Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870-1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), ix, 3.

controlled breeding, it was believed, could be used to perfect society.[22]

Thus, the years of the three expositions in Knoxville were also a time of great change for the highlander. As a result of various reform efforts, the economic pull of industrialization and urbanization, and the push of decreasing land acreage on Appalachian farms, many migrated to cities. The masses who came to the cities, like many who moved into Knoxville, experienced severe culture shock in the factories and mills where they worked. In general, they lost their self-reliance and became dependent on the industrial market for their well-being. The hierarchical structure of urban society and economy was an entirely new concept to in-migrant highlanders who were used to communal and semi-egalitarian social relations.[23]

Conservation, like highlander integration, was an integral part of Progressivism and the New South ideology. The term conservation in progressive rhetoric denoted the responsible and efficient exploitation of the nation's resources. Its origins can be traced to the 1875 founding of the American Forestry Association. Around this time, large sections of the American public began to realize the limitations of the nation's natural assets. Although this first organization focused on natural preservation for aesthetic purposes only, it laid the foundation for a blossoming forestry movement in the 1890s which increasingly focused on utilitarian values.[24] Other resources, such as water, land , and natural resource management were added to the conservationist agenda which became increasingly at odds with preservationist groups such as the Sierra Club. The first years of the twentieth century saw the

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[22] Ibid., 51, 129, 80, 89, 108.

[23] Ronald D. Eller, *Miners, Millhands and Mountaineers: The Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930*, Twentieth Century America Series (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1982), xix, xxii, xxiii.

[24] Samuel P. Hays. *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 27, 28.

rise of the man who became the nation's conservationist leader, Gifford Pinchot. As Chief of the Forestry Board, Pinchot and President Theodore Roosevelt, among others, championed the cause of conservation in the Progressive-era U.S.

Government ownership and operation of conservation projects were essential to Pinchot's program. A common feature in progressive government thought was that specialists, not politicians, would run these projects. But political gridlock was one of the most significant barriers to conservation. Pinchot's and Roosevelt's attempts to apply, for example, the multipurpose approach to water conservation (navigation, irrigation, flood control, and hydroelectric power) were thwarted by a suspicious Army Corps of Engineers under Secretary of War William Howard Taft. Political conflict continued in later years between the moderate policies of the Taft administration and its Secretary of Interior Richard Ballinger and the more progressive conservationist beliefs of Pinchot.[25]

Another obstacle to conservation was the lack of public knowledge about it and a general misinterpretation of its purpose. Pinchot launched conservation publicity campaigns, such as exposition displays, to reach the public. New support arose from an urban middle class that saw conservation as a moral solution to the pernicious effects of materialism wrought by industrialism. This included the adoption of conservation for aesthetic and moral purposes, such as the city beautiful movement, which believed that changing the physical appearance of a city would help battle vice and poverty. After 1908, conservation became an elastic term applied to everything from child conservation to "the conservation of manhood."[26] In the process, Pinchot did

[25] Ibid., 69, 100, 108-111, 154.
[26] Ibid., 130, 138, 142, 145, 176.

not remain a purist but rather accepted support for conservation, regardless of how misguided the public might have been about its original principles.[27]

It was in this context of a city faced with relative stagnation after a period of rapid growth that the three expositions were held. The barriers that separated Knoxville from New South prosperity were formidable. But to local civic leaders, a large exposition appeared to be the perfect way to remedy those problems.

[27] Ibid.

Chapter 1: The New South on Display

The conception of the Appalachian Exposition did not occur overnight. Knoxville had a tradition of small autumn fairs tracing back to the 1880s.[28] With this relatively recent tradition already solidified, local journalist William M. Goodman recognized the potential for a fair of proportions similar to the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition. Goodman was the Director General and Secretary of the Knoxville Commercial Club, an organization of local businessmen devoted to promoting, or "boosting", the city's economic potential. In 1900 he suggested that the club work towards creating a grand exposition to promote the area's interests to the hinterlands and beyond. In that year, an exposition company was created to oversee the funding and management of the event. After raising a quarter of the funds needed, opposition grew from the "conservative citizens" of Knoxville who claimed that the event was too large for the city and would consequently end in bitter failure.[29] The project was soon abandoned. The same process occurred again one year later. In 1907, the plan was promoted for a third time, but once again failed because organizers could not find a viable site for the exposition.[30]

Meanwhile, fall fairs became more and more elaborate in Knoxville. The

[28] "Fall Carnivals as Forerunners of Appalachian Exposition," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, Appalachian Exposition Edition, 6 September 1910, no author or page number.

[29] "Exposition Conceived in Commercial Club-Built in One Year," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, Appalachian Exposition Edition, 6 September 1910, no page number.

[30] Ibid.

last of these, the Music Festival of 1908, was an event full of concerts, parades, merchants' exhibits, and various contests. In that same year, the Commercial Club launched a massive publicity campaign in the form of newspaper advertisements for Goodman's brainchild, now dubbed the Appalachian Exposition. This fourth and final time, Commercial Club officials recognized the need to rally public support behind the grand event and plan it years in advance. Although not mentioned by any sources, the presence of the aggressive and dynamic businessman William J. Oliver, who came to Knoxville in the middle of the decade, probably played a important part in convincing the Commercial Club that the exposition would be a smashing success. The Appalachian Exposition Company was established in 1909 and company stockholders, mostly local businesses, provided the investments which made the expositions financially possible.[31] The event was slowly becoming an exciting reality.

Exposition company officials took measures to make sure the two expositions were successful. One of their wisest moves was recruiting a man named Sanford Cohen to act as exposition manager. An Augusta, Georgia native, Cohen was involved in the creation of the Augusta Exposition in 1895, the Piedmont Exposition in 1889-1891, and the grand Cotton States Exposition of 1895. Along with his expertise in planning such events, Cohen added a certain degree of prestige to the two Appalachian Expositions. In both years he acted as assistant to the president of the Appalachian Exposition Company.[32]

The expressed intentions of the Appalachian Expositions were stated clearly in the 1910 *Outline of Plans and Purposes*, themes echoed in 1911. The

[31] "A Brief and Concise History of the Exposition Movement," *The Daily Journal and Tribune* (Knoxville, TN) 1 September, 1910, 2; "Fall Carnivals as Forerunners...".

[32] *Appalachian Exposition - 1911 Premium List and Prospectus* (Knoxville, TN: S.P Newman & Co., c1911), 3.

broad purposes of the expositions were:

First: To stress the vital importance of conserving the forests and streams of the Appalachian region.
Second: To exploit the resources and potentialities of this wonderful mountain empire.
Third: To demonstrate the progress of the South in agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and commercial pursuits.[33]

This pamphlet as well as the *Premium List and Prospectus* for 1910 and 1911 promoted every area of agriculture, mining, business interests, and manufacturing Knoxville had to offer and described the region's abundant natural resources. This same boosterism can be found in countless promotional books about Knoxville with titles such as *The City of Knoxville, Tennessee, and Vicinity and Their Resources: An Accurate and Exhaustive Compendium of Useful Knowledge Concerning a Region Richly Endowed by Nature*. (1906).[34] The common pattern found in these books, exposition pamphlets, exposition displays, and exposition oratory is the same found in the above expressed purposes. The first two purposes promoted conservation and what it could do for the southern Appalachian region because of its extensive natural resources. The third purpose involved demonstrating that the initial steps towards progress had already been taken and that potential for further growth existed.

All of these broad and somewhat vague purposes constituted what came to be known as "The Spirit of the Appalachians". It was portrayed by the symbol of the exposition, the encircled initials "AE" surrounded by the wings of the American Eagle on which the motto appeared.[35] More subtly, the spirit emblem appeared on the cover of the *Premium List and Prospectus* for both years (see

[33] *Appalachian Exposition-Outline of Plans and Purposes* (Knoxville, TN: S.P. Newman & Co., c1910), 2.
[34] James T. Grady, ed. and comp., *The City of Knoxville, Tennessee, and Vicinity*... (no publication information. 1906).
[35] "Exposition Emblem at Entrance to Show" *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 3 September 1910. 10.

Figure 1). On the cover, a woman and a man gaze upon their utopian future with delight, and the symbolism in the scene is too strong to ignore. The scene consists of a factory on a riverbank directly across from black laborers working in a cotton field, all set against an exaggerated backdrop of mountains. It is clear that the factory represents progressive industry and the mountains represent natural resources and the beautiful side of Appalachian culture. But the laborers in the cotton field are somewhat puzzling. The southern Appalachian region had relatively few areas of cotton cultivation and the picture contradicts the New South advocacy of moving away from "King Cotton" towards diversification. This traditional depiction of blacks may have been included to appease conservatives by showing the old in harmony with the new and to convince visitors that Progressivism did not threaten white dominance.[36]

Especially in 1910, The Spirit of the Appalachians had an intoxicating effect on the populace of Knoxville. In that year, poems, songs, even Appalachianade, presumably a beverage, were produced by Knoxvillians in the months preceding the event.[37] In 1910, the exposition company organized a parade in which all Knoxvillians were invited to participate.[38] In 1911, local civic pride and enthusiasm were channeled more into the opening of the "white way" of Knoxville, a downtown area receiving new street lights. Also, the months preceding the second exposition did not have the same atmosphere of uncertainty and anticipation as the first year did, with a risky new venture on a new fairground. Since 1910 was a success, to Knoxvillians, 1911 would

[36] *Appalachian Exposition Premium List and Prospectus* (Knoxville, TN: S.P. Newman & Co., c1910), front cover; *Appalachian Exposition Premium List and Prospectus* (Knoxville, TN: S.P. Newman & Co., c1911), front cover.

[37] Ida Crawly, "The Spirit of Appalachia" *The Journal and Tribune* (Knoxville, TN), 6 October 1910, 6; Advertisement for "Appalachian Ann", "The new song of the 'Appalachian region which will be the popular air of the exposition" *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 25 July 1910, 2. Continuous ads ran in *The Knoxville Sentinel* stating simply "Appalachianade, what is it?".

[38] "Sign Pledge and Get in Expo. Parade" *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 6 July 1910, 8.

Figure 1. *Appalachian Exposition Premium List and Prospectus*, 1910, cover. Special Collections, University of Tennessee Hoskins Library, Knoxville, TN.

logically also be a success. Before the 1911 Appalachian Exposition, the spirit existed more in the form of wanting to outdo the efforts of a year ago.[39]

This enthusiasm was fueled by the hyperbolic rhetoric of exposition newspaper coverage and promotional publications. Phrases depicting parts of the expositions as "the best to be found anywhere" or the "most important" were commonplace. Similarly, Knoxville was praised as anything from "the Switzerland of America" to the more commonplace "Queen City of the Mountains".[40] Many articles covered the anticipated visit of President William Howard Taft to the 1910 exposition, but not one article mentioned his cancellation.[41] Knoxvillians seemed as busy convincing themselves of their importance as they were convincing the rest of the world.

The Appalachian Expositions were arranged mainly by buildings: The Main, Woman's, Forestry and Minerals, Livestock, Knox County, and "Negro" Buildings. The fairgrounds themselves were viewed as a large exhibit attesting to the natural beauty of the southern Appalachian region with its rolling hills and natural springs. The Midway of the fair hosted attractions and amusements ranging from "Ferari's Snake Den" to the "museum of freaks".[42] Certain days, such as Memphis Day and Ministers' Day, were devoted to specific places,

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[39] Heiskell, S.G., "Mayor Heiskell's Exposition Proclamation" *The Journal and Tribune*, September 1911, 9; "Success of 1910 Being Perpetuated This Year," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 4 September, 1911,13.

[40] "Los Angeles Woman's Impression"; Knoxville Board of Trade, *Knoxville, Tennessee: Queen City of the Mountains* (no publication information, c1917).

[41] It has become popular myth in later reports on the 1910 fair that Taft was indeed there, but I can assure you he was not. This misconception stems from the statement "President Taft, upon viewing these exhibits [of natural resources], said: 'I do not see why all of the people of this section are not millionaires.'" William M. Goodman, ed., *The First Exposition of Conservation and It's Builders* (Knoxville: Knoxville Lithographing Co., 1914), 50. Later authors assumed that he was at the exposition, but apparently he only saw part of this exhibit before it left Washington D.C. or possibly even photos of it.

[42] "Mammoth Building for Housing Vast Displays," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 4 September 1911, 24; "Interesting, Novel, and Thrilling Features of the Midway Jungle," *The Journal and Tribune*, 1 September 1910, 11; "Midway Attractions to be Opened Tonight," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 11 September 1911, 8.

peoples, or organizations.[43] Visiting orators, local and national figures, added to the attractions.

Among the nighttime activities, the pyrotechnical displays at the expositions were among the most fascinating to onlookers. A man named Pain, famous for his pretentious fireworks, spared no expenses in lighting up the skies. But the displays were more than flashes and booms, for they also had deep symbolic meaning. In 1910, "The Battle of the Clouds Display," what Sanford Cohen called an "allegory of the future", depicted the warfare of the future.[44] Another feature, "The Appalachian Sun of Prosperity" portrayed the expected growth of the region through a circular firework display which expanded to over three times its initial size.[45] In 1911, Pain turned to another topic to attract spectators. The area's historical resources were showcased in the "Battle of King's Mountain" display, a reenactment portraying the "Appalachian Forefathers" fighting in what one journalist called the "turning point in the American Revolution."[46] Both years, the displays were followed by more fireworks which cost $1,000 each time they were shown, virtually every night.[47]

During the daytime, exposition visitors could view the alien sight of aeroplanes and dirigible balloons high above. The 1910 fair was the first time aeroplanes could be seen in East Tennessee. Flying machines, by questioning the formerly accepted limits of humanity, symbolized the spirit of progress behind both expositions. Amidst the awe, they also provided spectators with a

[43] "Opening Day's Program, Special Days, and First Night Fireworks," *The Journal and Tribune*, 1 September, 1910, 5.
[44] "Sanford H. Cohen. "A Card to the Public," *The Journal and Tribune*, 19 September 1910, 10.
[45] "To-Day's Official Program of the Appalachian Exposition," *The Journal and Tribune*, 21 September 1910, 1.
[46] "Peerless Pyrotechnic Program Every Night," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 4 September 1911, 24.
[47] Ibid.; "Brilliant Display of Fireworks For Tonight," *The Journal and Tribune*, 19 September 1910, 2

glimpse of the future. Reporters emphasized the enormous practical potential of airships. "It will not be too much to say that within the next 100 years," *The Knoxville Sentinel* reported, "airships will...be making scheduled trips across the oceans, as well as transcontinental tours."[48]

Two final examples of these kinds of exposition exhibits were the "Eskimo Village" at the 1910 fair, and the pantomime with narrative depiction of Longfellow's "Hiawatha" complete with authentic Native Americans in 1911. The occupants of the Eskimo exhibit, acquaintances of the North Pole explorers Peary and Cook, had been touring the country from fair to fair. In addition to introducing visitors to a different culture, the Eskimos spent a great deal of their time telling stories about the "dash to the pole."[49] The Hiawatha depiction, held in an isolated part of the park only reached by boat, allowed the visitor to escape into another time when wild savagery ruled the land, in contrast to present-day civilization.[50] The presence of both exhibits at the expositions showed Knoxville in vogue, able to host attractions that were fashionable across the nation.

These types of attractions and displays, although important, were mere token appearances of Progressivism at the expositions. The real value of the fairs, as expressed by their founders, was their educational nature because education of the masses was a key element in progressive thought.

At the Minerals and Forestry Building, the exposition's task was twofold. Displays of resource samples carried out the first of these, the recognition of the region's potential. Demonstrations of old extraction methods in contrast to the

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[48] "Aviation Tournament, Progress made in Aerial Navigation," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, Appalachian Exposition Edition, 6 September 1910, no page number; "Recognized as the Best, Appalachian Exposition," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 14 September 1911, 5.

[49] "Eskimo Village at Exposition; Peary's Guide with Members," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 20 September 1910, 8.

[50] "Scenes of 'Hiawatha' Done by Real Indians," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 19 September 1911, 13.

new fulfilled the second task, showing how these resources were to be exploited efficiently. One exhibit showed the effects of inefficient resource use through a miniature landscape display containing two hills. One hill was green and full of trees while the other was barren and harshly eroded.[51] These exhibits came from a wide variety of sources including the U.S. government, Appalachian counties, corporations, and private collectors.[52] On the whole, exhibits and orators advocated cooperative conservation to guide the general welfare of the region and the nation. This inherently included government funding and regulation.

The agricultural displays followed a pattern similar to that of the Forestry and Minerals Department. First, the soil of the region was lauded for its fertility. Then, exhibits stressed agricultural development to benefit society. In 1910, the oratory of Gifford Pinchot most overtly expressed this sentiment. He asked that farmers adopt contour plowing to curtail erosion and asserted that "the farmer...must be able to compete with the city in order to make effective the movement from city to farm."[53] Therefore, Pinchot concluded , by raising the profitability of farming through conservation, the problems of urbanization could be solved by reversing the flow of urban migrants. Commissioner of Agriculture, Captain T.F. Peck, in 1911 explained how one could achieve such feats. Peck advocated the efficient use of every minute on the farm to allow extra time for the expansion and improvement of one's business.[54] The agricultural and

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[51] "Gifford Pinchot Urges National Conservation," *The Journal and Tribune*, 4 October 1910, page 1.

[52] "Minerals and Forestry Exhibit of Appalachian Region," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, Appalachian Exposition Edition, 6 September 1910, no page number; "The Great Forestry Exhibit," *The Journal and Tribune*, 1 October 1910, 10; George H. Freeman, "Minerals and Forestry Exhibits Comprehensive," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 4 September 1911, no page number.

[53] "Pinchot's Address," *The Journal and Tribune*, 8 October 1910, 7.

[54] Captain T.F. Peck, "The Waste of Time on the Farm," *The Journal and Tribune*, 18 September 1911, 10.

livestock exhibits involved contests which rewarded the best squash or the best heifer, thereby setting standards on which future progress should be based.

Oratory at the expositions also praised the human resources of the southern Appalachian region. Racial purity was an invaluable asset, Theodore Roosevelt noted: "it is a very great pleasure to be here in East Tennessee...where the type of citizen, the average-citizen, is more purely native American than in any other part of our country."[55] The South's isolation had its advantages. Whereas immigration diluted northern Anglo-Saxon purity, the southern highlanders retained what were perceived to be the ideals and spirit associated with the blood of the western European founders of the nation.[56] With such an assiduous work ethic inherited genetically, isolated highlanders would undoubtedly provide the New South with a rich labor supply.

Exhibits and oratory dealing directly with the economic growth of the region portrayed the area's potential and provided methods and standards on which further progress should be based. The responsible exploitation of resources, be they natural or human, would benefit the region, the nation, and the world. So the specter of conservatism which loomed over Knoxville was dealt with indirectly. The most significant offensive on it was made through the promotion of conservation. Conservation was essential to the New South vision because irresponsible resource exploitation would ensure that any economic growth would be very short-term. The results of focusing on short-term growth in Appalachia were obvious: soil erosion, deforestation, and economic stagnation. Conversely, no resource exploitation at all would reap equally devastating economic effects. Conservationist resource exploitation would involve hefty long-term investments and more pervasive government action to

[55] "Col. Theodore Roosevelt's Speech to the Assembled Thousands in Exposition Stadium," *The Journal and Tribune*, 8 October 1910, 1.

[56] Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, 34.

foster long-term growth. This agenda would benefit both conservatives and urban in-migrant highlanders alike.

Another important theme of the expositions was the promotion of civic unity. To the exposition company and other participants, "The Spirit of the Appalachians" which swept the city seemed an optimistic augury of unity to come. Properly applied, this cooperative work ethic could transform Knoxville into what they hoped would be **the** progressive city of the South. Recognizing this, Sanford Cohen promoted the 1910 exposition as a "harmonizer of opinions" bringing in contact, among others, "the 'poor white' and the freedman."[57] In addition to other obstacles to unity, quelling problems of race relations proved to be quite a task.

According to historian Lester Lamon, Knoxville and the surrounding region had a rather small black population. In 1900, only 13 percent of Tennessee's African American population was in East Tennessee. But that community contained a large proportion of middle class African Americans. Knoxville College, an exclusively black institution, provided the local black populace with well-educated teachers and other professionals. Dr. H.M. Green, a physician and long-time alderman of Knoxville's fifth ward, exemplified this strong middle class standing. This "prominent Republican politician" was known for his fight for better public services in his district.[58] Yet Green and many other black Knoxvillians preferred to work within the existing white power structure. Challenges to that structure, such as the 1905 streetcar boycott to destroy segregation within Knoxville's public transit system, were met with little popular black support.[59]

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[57] Sanford H. Cohen, "Benefits of the Exposition," *The Journal and Tribune*, 25 September 1910, 2.

[58] Lester C. Lamon, *Black Tennesseans, 1900-1930*, Twentieth Century America Series (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977), 2, 33, 39, 220, 230.

[59] Ibid., 33, 220.

Dr. Green was chairman of the African American Department each year at the expositions. The "Negro" Department provided an opportunity for African Americans to present themselves as part of the New South image. To the local black community, it became a source of inspiration and pride. For the white working class of Knoxville, it was an attempt to convince them that African Americans were worthy of their respect. To the elite of Knoxville, the department was a "mile stone of black progress", an exhibition of the product of an educational investment through taxes which "cost the southern white man hundreds of thousands of dollars."[60]

The African American Department contained generally the same types of displays as the rest of the exposition. Exhibits portrayed the livestock, agricultural, and industrial achievements of blacks in ways similar to those areas of the rest of the exposition. The "Colored" Women's Department exhibited achievements in everything from cooking to needlework. A display which contained "every copyrighted negro publication, together with every negro newspaper in the country" promoted the black intellect.[61]

The facilities of the African American Department themselves were one of the most powerful testimonies to black progress. J. H. Michael, foreman of the carpentry department of Knoxville College, was the architect of the building. African Americans supplied all of the labor used in its construction. Knoxville College Hospital provided full hospitalization facilities for the black visitors to the fairs.[62]

There was one important way in which the African American Department

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[60] Heiskell, Samuel G., "Mayor Heiskell's Welcome on Behalf of People of City," *The Journal and Tribune*, 12 September 1911, 11

[61] Negroe's [sic] Day at Exposition," containing address given by Dr. H.M. Green, *The Journal and Tribune*, 25 September 1910, 2.

[62] "Colored Department. Exponent of Progress of Negroes," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, Appalachian Exposition Edition, 6 September 1910, no page number.

differed from the rest of the two expositions. Whereas the two fairs focused on the achievements and potential of the southern Appalachian region, the Negro pavilion focused not only on blacks of East Tennessee, but on the achievements of all African Americans. This concept that race transcended region further reinforced racial boundaries. Being black carried with it stereotypes beyond one's place of residence, but being white needed further qualification, such as "southerner" or "highlander" to indicate a sense of geographical identity.

The oratory regarding the purpose of the Black Department reveals the perceived limits of black progress within a social system still governed by paternalism and deference. Dr. Green promoted the New South ideal of racial harmony without challenging black disfranchisement. In reaction to the perceived kindness of whites in letting blacks have a building at the exposition, Green said, "We believe that such interest in us must make us more loyal...to our section and to the dominant race in our section."[63] The president of the 1911 exposition, Lawrence D. Tyson, seemed to agree with this kind of deference. "I want to say to the Negro that the people of the South are after all the best friends that he has...," Tyson said, "the people here understand him and are more sympathetic to him than our northern neighbors."[64]

Sources indicating reactions to the African American exhibits from the local black community are scanty. Yet the Knoxville College newspaper, *Aurora,* made comments in one 1910 article that were similar to those in the local newspapers. The majority of this article is simply a quote from Knoxville's *Journal and Tribune*, which to a certain degree indicates approval of white perceptions of the black department from a portion of the middle class black

[63] "Colored Department to Have Splendid Display," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 4 September 1911. 19.

[64] "President Tyson's Address to the Negroes," *The Knoxville Sentinel*. 12 September 1911, 4

population.[85] Similarly, the Nashville *Globe*, a black newspaper of that city, lauded the African American department's progressive displays and positive portrayal of black Tennesseans.[86]

In the displays and addresses of each year, the fairs promoted a related set of ideas about the roles of in-migrant whites and blacks. Both groups in the New South were to serve as the labor supply for industrialization. Thus, both had to be convinced that this was to their benefit. Although working class whites and blacks could not aspire to the upper echelons of New South society, they would reap the benefits of industrialization because the standard of living at all levels would rise. Meanwhile, blacks were leaving Knoxville in the first decade of the twentieth century. One of the main reasons they were leaving was because of poor relations with working class whites. The emigration of blacks had to be stopped or factory, mill, and mine workers would become homogeneously white and the workers might organize unions which would stunt growth. Thus, rhetoric promoted racial harmony and displays of black progress were encouraged so that whites would be friendly and African Americans would stay. But although there was to be a unity of cause in building the New South, racial separation within that cause would ensure that working class whites and blacks did not unite to impede industrial interests through labor organization.

It was not only essential, therefore, that black visitors attend the expositions to learn their New South roles, but that working class whites also visit to view black progress on display and learn their own part in the New South. One problem with this arrangement was pointed out by local man Fred McBee in 1910. In an advertisement in *The Journal and Tribune*, Mr. McBee

[85] "The Appalachian Exposition," in *The Aurora* (Knoxville College Publication) 25, no.1 (1910), 12-13

[86] "Exposition Held in Knoxville Great Success," *The Globe* (Nashville), 14 October 1910, 1.

petitioned "Mr. Oliver and Mr. Directors" to open the exposition on one Sunday for those who worked Monday through Saturday. "You have entertained the rich lavishly for three weeks," McBee wrote, "now give the masses just one day."[67] Instead of appearing sacrilegious by breaking the sabbath, "Wage Earner's Day" was celebrated in 1910 when all local factories and plants shut down so that workers could visit the exposition.[68] Similarly, coal miners were given an opportunity to visit the exposition in 1910 on "Coal Miner's Day" and "Coal Men's Day" in 1911. At least in 1910, on this day, coal mine operators gave their workers a paid day off and paid transportation to visit the exposition.[69] Therefore, industrialists sacrificed money and a day's worth of production to make sure that the laborers of southern Appalachia were at the fairgrounds to see evidence of black and white progress and be taught to take pride in their New South role as the rank and file of industrial development.

The white Woman's Building at the fairs promoted the New South role of women both in the home and community. The arts and crafts and floral arts sections of the Woman's Department held contests for home products as a demonstration of "the kind of work that...will make the home more attractive."[70] The progress of domestic science was one of the most emphasized aspects of this department. The "science" of efficient cooking, cleaning, and child care was emphasized in contrast to unnecessary "extravagance".[71] In 1911, standards of proper homemaking were even more overt with the establishment of a "model home" interior complete with an "ideal kitchen" and "perfect pantry".[72] Women of

[67] Fred McBee, "Walking in Paradise on Sunday," *The Journal and Tribune*, 7 October 1910, 4
[68] "Fourth Week's Official Program of the Appalachian Exposition," *The Journal and Tribune*, 2 October 1910, 8.
[69] "Coal Miner's Day," *The Appalachian Trade Journal* (Knoxville: Appalachian Publishing Company, Inc.) 5, no. 2 (September, 1910), 22.
[70] "Work of Women at the Appalachian Exposition," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 20, July, 1910. 9
[71] "Historical and Domestic," *The Journal and Tribune*, 6 October 1910, 11.
[72] "Modern Achievements of Domestic Science," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 4 September 1911, no page number.

the exhibition saw their household role as crucial, because "Tennessee women are the power in the home, and Tennessee manhood, of which we are so proud, is the product of the womanhood of the state."[73] Although supposedly confined to the home, women took pride in the power they had in shaping society.

Yet women's interests spread far beyond the home. The literature committee of the Woman's Department established the "Appalachian library" exhibit which boasted the literature of southern authors. Its purpose was to raise the status of southern literature in relation to northern literature, and "enlarge the capabilities of the South along other lines."[74] Prohibition was preached through the Women's Christian Temperance Union display. An addition in 1911 was the establishment of the Children's Department in the Woman's Building. Interestingly, the exhibit was divided into two sections, one for all children under the age of fifteen and the other which focused on females in their later teens. Both exhibited arts and crafts. But one cannot ignore the fact that older females were grouped together in one department with both male and female children , an arrangement which attested to the subservient "place" of women in a patriarchal society.[75]

So the Woman's Building promoted the image of the New South white woman, mostly as mother, wife, and occasionally as community servant. By having contests for the best apple pie, hand painted china, and quilts, women were presented with standards of good cooking and home adornments.[76] Even more overtly, the model kitchen and dining room demonstrated the exact

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[73] "Historical and Domestic."

[74] "To Conserve Literature of the Southern States," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, Appalachian Exposition Edition, 6 September 1910, no page number; "Handiwork of Women," *The Journal and Tribune*, 12 September 1911, 10.

[75] "Handiwork of Women."

[76] "Woman's Building to be Ready on Monday," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 1 September 1911, 6.

science of homemaking which any good wife and mother would practice with rigor, if she cared about her family. Outside the home, women were presented as upholders of culture and morality in restricted community activities. The part of the children's exhibit which dealt with high school and college-age females was created to ensure that the next generation of mothers and wives would also follow these standards.

The activities of the Woman's Building overlapped into another realm, that of the highlanders. Although they were portrayed in slightly different ways in 1910 and 1911, both fairs promoted the same values of modernization and integration of Appalachian dwellers. The individualism and racism of urban highlander in-migrants were countered by the expositions' calls for more pervasive government actions as an essential part of conservation, promotions of civic unity, and the displays of African American progress. Yet for the New South in the southern Appalachian region to be complete, the integration of isolated highlanders into this image was crucial. In the 1910 Appalachian Exposition, exhibits characterized them as a novel group of people with unique traditions from the past. But more importantly, in both 1910 and 1911, they were portrayed as a people in the midst of progressive transformation.

There were two cabins on the 1910 fairgrounds which portrayed the primitive side of Appalachian culture. The first of these, "Farragut's Birthplace", symbolized all that needed to be changed about Appalachian culture with its "old-fashioned flowers," "old newspapers for wall decorations," and "unwholesome odor."[77] The second, "Aunt Mary's" cabin, was occupied by 104-year-old Mary Faust of Anderson County and her 58-year-old daughter. Here, bare-footed Mary and her daughter wove and answered visitors' questions,

[77] "Farragut's Birthplace," *The Journal and Tribune*, 13 September 1910, 3.

promoting the old-fashioned simplicity of their lifestyle.[78]

At the 1910 exposition there was also a third cabin which was the symbol of the future of highlanders in their New South role. This two-room cabin was erected under the direction of the Woman's Department chairman Mrs. Herbert W. Hall and occupied during the exposition by a teacher who worked with the highlanders. The second room contained products of the mountain settlement schools' industrial work.[79] The rhetoric portrayed the mountaineer as a victim of isolation, but with the untapped potential of becoming a "healthy, vigorous, and intelligent race... of pure Anglo-Saxon stock."[80]

In 1911 it was "Farragut's Birthplace" that became the symbol of the New South highlander. Instead of a run-down, unsightly cabin, this abode now housed the same types of things found in the third cabin of the 1910 exposition. In the place of old newspapers, paintings done by highlanders covered the walls. Other products of mountain work were displayed on tables. Mountain worker Mrs. Webb of Maryville, Tennessee, lived in this cabin during the 1911 exposition. Although not intentional, the transformation of this cabin from an old shack in 1910 to a display of Appalachian progress in 1911 itself symbolized the expected transformation of Appalachian culture.[81]

The "Mountain Work" Department of 1911 all but ignored the bucolic and rustic aspects of Appalachian culture. Instead, the traditional crafts of highlanders such as baskets, wood carvings, and coverlets became "salable goods", products to be integrated into the capitalist market. These country capitalists, it was hoped, would visit the exposition, see the products of

[78] "Popular Point of Interest," *The Journal and Tribune*, 25 September 1910, 7

[79] "Typical Cabin in Which Mountain Work is Done," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, Appalachian Exposition Edition, 6 September 1910, no page number.

[80] Mrs. Herbert H. McCampbell, "Advancements Made by Southern Highlanders," *The Knoxville Sentinel*. Appalachian Exposition Edition, 6 September 1910, no page number.

[81] "Typical Mountain Home at Exposition," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 19 September 1911. 8.

mountain work and potential for profit, go home, and create. There was also talk of creating a permanent importation system of Appalachian goods to urban centers for sale.[82]

The two Appalachian Expositions preached essentially the same message. A full-scale attack was launched on the southern conservative and Appalachian urbanites' tendency to resist change through the ideology of conservation and its agenda of increased government intervention in business and municipal affairs. The spirit of unity and cooperation of the expositions attempted to break down traditional barriers to progress even further. To quell racial tensions and promote interracial cooperation, blacks were portrayed as a vital part of the New South in the southern Appalachian region. Both blacks and women, although separated from the rest of the fairs, perceived their departments as significant boosts to their identity and worth. Cabins and oratory portrayed highlanders as an item of novelty, simplicity and backwardness in 1910. But more importantly, in both years they were presented as a group with the potential to participate in regional progress.

[82] Mrs. Mary B. Mellen. "Mountain Work Shown in Appalachian Cabin," *The Knoxville Sentinel*. 4 September, 1911. 16.

Chapter 2: Dynamism and Conservatism

"Our great trouble and the reason we do not advance faster is because of our intense desire to appear well in the eyes of a few as being conservative."[83] Concisely put, William Oliver's statement alluded to the difference between him and many of the other businessmen of Knoxville. This difference between the audacity of Oliver and the conservatism of Knoxville's elite was demonstrated in the differences between the two Appalachian Expositions.

On the surface, the Appalachian Expositions of 1910 and 1911 did indeed seem almost identical. Evidence indicates, however, that the fundamental nature of the 1911 fair was slightly more conservative. A new exposition leadership and speakers with different political allegiances in 1911 are both manifestations of this shift. Also, some addresses at the 1911 fair nostalgically glorified the old Confederacy, a very anti-New South theme. Finally, in 1911 no black or woman suffragist oratory was found in newspaper coverage of the exposition and the Women's Congress included men.

The most obvious contrast between the leadership of the two years is evident with the two presidents of the Appalachian Exposition Company. In 1910, local manufacturer and railroad contractor William J. Oliver held the

[83] William M. Goodman, "Talks About Knoxville," in *The Knoxville Market Annual* (Knoxville, TN: The Knoxville Printing and Box Co., 1909), no page number.

presidency. A South Bend, Indiana native, Oliver worked in Arizona before moving to Knoxville around 1905. There he founded the William J. Oliver Manufacturing Company, which produced heavy machinery and supplies. The company actually submitted a bid, albeit unsuccessful, for the construction of the Panama Canal. His company's own William J. Oliver Chilled Plow was considered a revolutionary achievement in agricultural improvement. Oliver also established the Knoxville, Sevierville, and East Railroad in 1908, hoping to exploit the riches of the nearby mountains.[84] But Oliver's empire extended well beyond local economic interests. *Greater Knoxville Illustrated*, a promotional booklet edited by William M. Goodman, listed William Oliver as owner, president, vice-president or director of fifteen different companies from South Carolina to Oklahoma.[85] A born risk taker, Oliver once proclaimed "conservatism belongs to the man who has money invested in government bonds and only has sufficient brains to play ping-pong."[86] To one accustomed to traditional local modest business practices, this "foremost captain of industry", an aggressive outsider, must have seemed quite threatening to the social and economic order.

Lawrence D. Tyson, president of the Appalachian Exposition Company in 1911, was born in 1861 in Greenville, North Carolina. In 1883 he graduated from West Point Academy and subsequently taught military science at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. In 1893 he graduated from law school at that university and began practicing in Knoxville. After serving in the Spanish-American War, Tyson resumed practicing law and began a successful career in

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[84] Alice L. Howell, "Prominent Knoxvillians," in *Heart of the Valley: A History of Knox County, Tennessee*, ed. Lucile Deadrick (Knoxville: East Tennessee Historical Society, 1976), 527-528.

[85] *Greater Knoxville Illustrated* (Nashville, TN: The American Illustrating Company, c1910), 70-72; Grady, *The City of Knoxville, Tennessee, and Vicinity* .. , no page number given

[86] Goodman, "Talks About Knoxville," *The Knoxville Market Annual*, no page number.

textile manufacturing, real estate, and mining. Between 1903 and 1905, he served as a Democratic speaker of the House of Representatives. Tyson later served as Brigadier General in World War I and Tennessee Senator. In 1920, he unsuccessfully sought the Democratic nomination for the Vice Presidency of the United States.[87]

Lawrence D. Tyson had one advantage that William Oliver did not. In 1886 he married Bettie Humes McGhee. The very wealthy McGhee family had a great deal of influence in Knoxville. Tyson's father-in-law, Charles McClung McGhee, was the great-grandson of Knoxville's founder James White. After acquiring a small fortune in railroad building, he invested money in many local enterprises. C. M. McClung, one of McGhee's other son-in-laws, had his own wholesale business built on his investments. Similarly, McGhee owned most of Knoxville Woolen Mills' stock, an operation headed by Tyson during the first decade of the twentieth century.[88]

It is clear that these two men, Oliver and Tyson, represented two different types of business and social worlds in Knoxville. Tyson's was a world of relatively old wealth, a world of an exclusive social elite tied together by familial relationships, tradition, and common economic goals. Oliver's world was one of dynamic business acumen based on the hope for the unlimited growth of the South, not the preservation of traditions of the past. Politically, Lawrence D. Tyson was an ardent Democrat. William Oliver was a staunch Republican and *The Knoxville Sentinel* claimed he was also a personal friend of Theodore

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[87] *Lawrence D. Tyson, Late a Senator from Tennessee: Memorial Addresses Delivered in Congress*, 71st Congress, 1st session, Senate document no. 27 (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1930), 5; *Who's Who in Tennessee* (Memphis, TN: Paul & Douglas Co., 1911), 234-235.

[88] William J. MacArthur, Jr., "Knoxville's History: An Interpretation," in *Heart of the Valley: A History of Knoxville, Tennessee*, Lucile Deadrick, ed. (Knoxville: East Tennessee Historical Society, 1976), 44.

Roosevelt.[89] Although one should not make the mistake of viewing these two strains of economic and social outlooks as rigid or completely irreconcilable, sources indicate they did indeed exist.

The distinction between the more dynamic businessmen of 1910 and the social and economic elite of 1911 is reflected in the composition of the other officials of the fairs. The 1910 Appalachian Exposition Company had 23 officials from the president to the board of directors. The 1911 company doubled that amount with 46 officials. Despite the vast increase in the number of officials, 12 of the original 23 in 1910 were not part of the 1911 exposition company.[90] This is quite odd, considering only one year separated the two events and the officials of the first year were the only local figures who had the experience from the previous year. What happened to more than half of the company officials? In a *Knoxville Sentinel* article on the 1910 exposition officials, six of those who did not return the following year were described as "young" businessmen.[91]

Biographical sketch books provide more clues to the enigmatic changing of the exposition guard. Even though William J. Oliver was declared "one of the South's best known men" and had the accomplishments to match that description, his name was not included in a number of contemporary biographical sketches on Knoxvillians and Tennesseans.[92] Books such as *Who's Who in Tennessee* and *Men of Affairs in Knoxville* did not mention him and only mentioned two of the twelve who did not remain with the Appalachian Exposition Company in 1911. But these two books did include biographical

[89] "Oliver for Roosevelt if He Wants it Again," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 18 September 1911.
[90] "Officials Engineering Appalachian Exposition's Making," *The Knoxville Sentinel, Appalachian Exposition Edition*, 6 September 1910, no page number; *Appalachian Exposition Premium List and Prospectus* (Knoxville: S.P. Newman and Co., c1911), 3, 7.
[91] "Officials Engineering Appalachian Exposition's Making."
[92] Ibid.

sketches of twenty-two of the forty-six officers of the 1911 exposition.[93] Biographical sketches of Oliver, however, do appear in promotional books such as *Greater Knoxville Illustrated* and *The City of Knoxville, Tennessee, and Vicinity, and Their Resources*, books devoted to promoting a progressive image of Knoxville.[94] The juxtaposition of these two types of books is further evidence of the existence of progressive and more conservative interests in Knoxville, a characteristic reflected in the differences between the fairs.

It is more difficult to ascertain whether or not the same type of transformation occurred in the Woman's Department of the expositions. Besides newspapers' scant biographical descriptions of the women involved, the only way to examine the lives of these women is through their husbands. Evidence does suggest that Mrs. Herbert W. Hall, chairman of the 1910 exposition, was part of a rising progressive middle class in Knoxville, not part of the social elite. According to *The Knoxville Sentinel*, "Mrs. Hall is not a club woman and has rarely taken any active interest in public work."[95] Thus, she was a stranger to leadership roles in social occasions like the 1910 exposition. Her husband, Herbert W. Hall, was secretary and treasurer of the Hall and Donahue Coffin Company. This establishment developed a new type of coffin which had convenient color-coordinated handles attached during its making.[96] Unfortunately, there is little information on Mrs. A. Percy Lockett, head of the women's department in 1911. Newspapers mention little more than her name. Her husband was involved in W.B. Lockett and Company wholesale business and the operations of Jefferson Woolen Mills. The Lockett family in Knoxville

[93] *Men of Affairs in Knoxville, 1917* (Knoxville: Joel L. Baker and Stuart Towe, 1917); *Who's Who in Tennessee* (Memphis: Paul and Douglas Co., Publishers, 1911).
[94] Grady, *The City of Knoxville, Tennessee*, no page number.
[95] "Work of Women in the Appalachian Exposition," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 20 July 1910, 9.
[96] C T. Selby, mngr. *Directory of Knoxville, TN* (Knoxville: Directory Company Publishers, 1910-1917, 1920-1925, 1927), under "Hall, Herbert W."

was quite affluent and prestigious, compared with Mrs. Herbert W. Hall, part of a rising middle class in Knoxville.[97]

An examination of the promotional book *Knoxville, Tennessee and Vicinity and Their Natural Resources...* explains one reason why the more conservative business and social elite of Knoxville may have felt threatened. This source lists a number of businesses in Knoxville and their respective owners and managers. A large number of those mentioned were born outside of the South and came to Knoxville not too long before the expositions. Some, like Thomas Turner of Thomas Turner, Builders and Contractors, were born outside of the U.S. The future of Knoxville's well-established elite must have seemed bleak, their status in jeopardy of falling victim to a new, more mobile and fluid social order.

Taken alone, this evidence of a transition from a more progressive to a more conservative leadership may not seem very significant. But taken together with further evidence, one cannot ignore the probability that there were indeed some very real differences between the basic nature of the two expositions. Even though they both preached New South messages, the two fairs represent two different ideas about the extent of change needed.

The orators at each fair changed in a manner similar to the leadership. At the 1910 exposition, four key speakers gave addresses at various times during the festivities. Former president Theodore Roosevelt visited the fair and used the opportunity to preach his progressive doctrine of reform and morality. Roosevelt's political ally, Gifford Pinchot, spoke to exposition visitors about the necessity of adopting conservationist forestry, mining, and farming practices.[98]

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[97] "A.P. Lockett Dies at Home," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 6 December 1926, no page number; "Farewell to W.B. Lockett," *The Journal and Tribune*, 21 July 1906, no page number.

[98] "Col. Roosevelt's Speech to the Assembled Thousands in Exposition Stadium," *The Journal and Tribune*, 8 October 1910, 1; "Gifford Pinchot Urges National Conservation."

The progressive policies and agendas of both of these Republicans were considered quite liberal in their time.

During the Women's Congress at the 1910 exposition the famous Charlotte Perkins Gilman addressed visitors. In her progressive rhetoric, Gilman complained that tradition held the nation back. Instead of worshiping those who have come before us, she asserted, people should concern themselves with generations to come. A renowned feminist, suffragist, and socialist, Gilman was known for her radical advocacy of women's economic independence in her *Women and Economics* (1898). In this book, as in her lectures and articles, Gilman insisted that women's dependence on men was unnatural and impeded the progress of all humankind. Her 1911 work, *Man-Made World*, took her arguments even further by claiming that the world would be a better place if positive female qualities, such as peacefulness and cooperation, replaced the negative male traits that then governed human relations.[99] Although newspaper coverage of her oratory at the exposition indicates her words were moderate in comparison to her other interests, Gilman's appearance alone testifies to a liberal-minded group of fair officials.

The local Equal Suffrage League was involved in the Women's Congress at the 1910 exposition. Although not openly addressed by the exposition, the vote for women was advocated by Julia S. Lucky in *The Journal and Tribune* during the exposition. In an article entitled, "Some Reasons for Equal Suffrage in Knoxville," Lucky based her argument on the important role of women in prohibition, public schools, and other activities of community uplift. Up to this point, Lucky wrote, the only response from men had been "Back,

[99] Edward T. James, ed., Janet Wilson James, assoc. ed., Paul S. Boyer, assist. ed., *Notable American Women, 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), 39-42.

ladies. Keep within your sphere, except when we want you to work."[100] These sentiments, therefore, existed but were ignored by the 1910 exposition because the ballot for females was not compatible with the restricted New South role for women. Moreover, it was feared that the vote for women would intensify the black suffrage movement.

At the Negro Department of the 1910 fair, Judson W. Lyons delivered an address entitled "The Progress of the Negro Race in a Half Century" on "Negro Day". Lyons, a lawyer and former Register of the U.S. Treasury, emphasized the role African Americans had played in "pushing forward the country to its present proportions." But even though blacks had earned the rights and privileges of American citizens, their freedom was suffocated by "Jim Crow". Here, Lyons states black grievances clearly: "Disfranchisement must be opposed, fought and defeated. It is un-American, it is unprogressive, it is illegal and unconstitutional."[101] The irony is strong: Lyons attacked New South progressives' racial ideals on their own grounds by calling them unprogressive. Like Julia Lucky, Lyons' rhetoric in the tradition of W.E.B. Du Bois pointed to the existence of radical sentiments that challenged the limits allotted to blacks in the New South vision.

In 1911, exposition orators and their addresses were quite different from those of 1910. In contrast to the previous year, all of the major speakers were Democrats. Democratic Governor Judson Harmon of Ohio, a prospective candidate for the 1912 presidential election, spoke of nationalization and conservation. Reporters questioned Speaker of the House Champ Clark about

[100] Julia S. Lucky, "Some Reasons for Equal Suffrage in Knoxville," *The Journal and Tribune*, 28 September 1910, 6.

[101] Judson W. Lyons, "The Progress of the Negro Race in a Half Century," *The Journal and Tribune*, 25 September 1910, 4; Albert Nelson Marquis, ed., *Who's Who in America: A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Living Men and Women of the United States* (Chicago: A.N. Marquis & Company, 1908), 1178.

the possibility of his Democratic presidential candidacy. Finally, Tennessee Senator Luke Lea promoted harmony within the Democratic party and called for Democratic politicians to reach out to the common man.[102] All of these men, were Democrats, the party associated with traditional southern political allegiances.

Not only did the political parties of the speakers change between the 1910 and 1911 fairs, so did the content of their oratory. Like the 1910 fair, orators made general calls for progress and conservation mixed in with political comments. But two speeches preached Old South nationalism with ardor. The first step in creating a New South was leaving the scarring memories of the Civil War behind. But to General Bennett H. Young of Kentucky, Appomattox did not smother the southern spirit or "morality" of the Confederate cause. Similarly, Mayor Samuel G. Heiskell's "Welcome on Behalf of People of City" mentioned, in regard to the Civil War, that "superior numbers had defeated them [the Confederacy] in battle, but not conquered them in spirit."[103] He also disparaged Andrew Carnegie's steel empire by claiming that the Southern Appalachian region would embrace cotton as its salvation and the area's citizens would eventually surpass the affluence of northern industrial magnates. Both the glorification of the Confederacy and the assertion that the future of the Appalachian region depended upon cotton were very conservative and traditional comments, and countered such New South precepts of leaving the Civil War behind and diversifying agriculture.

Although not in the same way, sources indicate that the Woman's Department experienced a similar shift towards conservatism. During the 1910

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[103] "Beautiful Tributes to Confederate Dead," *The Knoxville Sentinel*. 28 September 1911, 4; Samuel G. Heiskell, "Mayor Heiskell's Welcome on Behalf of People of City," *The Journal and Tribune*, 12 September 1911, 11.

exposition, the Congress of Women, held under the auspices of the Woman's Department, was an exclusively female occasion including speeches and demonstrations that educated women about their proper role in society. The exclusion of men in 1910 provided the women of the fair a means of exhibiting collective female agency. In 1911, men were included in the roster of speakers at the Women's Congress and thus vitiated the female autonomy of the previous year. In some of the newspaper coverage, the meetings were simply regarded as the congresses at the exposition. The subject matter of speeches broadened in 1911 to include "history, patriotism, sociology, [and] philanthropy."[104] This slightly more conservative policy thwarted any chance of the expression of radical views. In this case, male guidance was that conservatism. Also, newspaper coverage carried nothing remotely similar to Julia Lucky's call for women's enfranchisement.

The oratory at the African American Department of the 1911 fair was much more moderate than that of Judson Lyons a year before. On Negro Day in 1911, attorney D.W. Perkins gave an introductory address in which he expressed the African American's gratitude for the white man's help and guidance. Unfortunately, local newspapers did not publish the address of the keynote speaker Register of the U.S. Treasury J. C. Napier. Yet since he was chairman of the executive committee of the National Negro Business League, an organization founded by Booker T. Washington, it can be assumed that he exhibited views associated with the "Atlanta Compromise," unlike Lyons a year earlier.[105]

An examination of the list of exposition company stockholders of each year shows that there was some overlap between those who funded each

[104] "Appalachian Women to Have Club Congresses," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 4 September 1911, 18.

[105] "Negro Day Celebrated," *The Journal and Tribune*, 28 September 1911, 7

year's fair. Although there was a significantly smaller number of stockholders in 1910, a majority of the individuals and corporations which invested in 1910 also invested in 1911. On a personal level, although Lawrence Tyson invested only in 1911, William Oliver held stock in both years. Investing in the Appalachian Expositions was not only a way to show civic pride, but also a way to make some money.

In conclusion, one should not view these two contrasting outlooks represented by the two fairs as overt forces in Knoxville. William J. Oliver and Lawrence Tyson did not have public debates over the city's future. Two different political and economic fronts were not at war with each other for control of the city. In everyday relations the two worlds represented by Oliver and Tyson were much less defined. But the differences between the two expositions points to the existence of those two worlds and suggests something of how they functioned in the city. All of these changes are pieces of a puzzle. Each piece taken by itself illuminates little about the differences between the two expositions. But taken as a whole, the new leadership, different type of speakers, different type of speeches, and changes in the Women's Congress all indicate that there was a general shift towards conservatism in the 1911 exposition. Why? It is probable that new exposition leaders in 1911, consisting of the social elite of Knoxville, took control of an event which had the potential to undermine the existing social order and thus their own status. The 1911 exposition was the last "Appalachian" exposition to be held in Knoxville. But it marked only the beginning of a tradition of large autumn fairs; a tradition perpetuated in 1913 by its heir, the National Conservation Exposition.

Chapter 3: Conservation and its New South Applications

Local newspapers speculated about a 1912 Appalachian Exposition after the 1911 event. The Appalachian Expositions were designed to be held annually *ad infinitum* and at least one journalist of *The Knoxville Sentinel* recognized that "the exposition is stimulating the people of this region in every way."[106] Exposition officials, however, had something else in mind for the future of fairs in Knoxville. As progressive minds usually worked, instead of reveling in the glory of a recent memory, officials wanted to plan an even larger event that would attract the entire nation's attention. In order to get that recognition and transform the Appalachian Exposition into a national affair, exposition officials turned to the federal government. The result was the National Conservation Exposition of 1913.

The National Conservation Exposition was a conundrum of change and continuity from the last two expositions. But the change seems to have been merely superficial while the continuity appears to have been fundamental. There is no doubt that the 1913 fair was bigger and more popular than its two predecessors. More buildings and exhibits were erected, more recognition was given from abroad, and the event lasted almost four times longer than the 1911

[106] "Now for the 1912 Exposition." *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 2 November 1911, 4.

fair. A congressional committee even visited to examine the exhibits.[107] Yet despite their efforts to create a national affair, the end result was an event which closely resembled the two previous expositions. There were, of course, some modifications because the 1913 event took place in a slightly different milieu. But although the scope of the exposition was national, the people of Knoxville and the vicinity used the fair to further their own regional interests through the promulgation of the same progressive New South message. The most poignant demonstration of this is in the manipulation of the word "conservation" to include anything from conservation of the home to the conservation of souls. The exposition became yet another celebration of Knoxville and the surrounding area in an attempt to attract new residents and investments. For example, one newspaper report of the congressional committee's visit to the exposition said little of their impressions of the necessity of conservation learned from the exposition or even the exposition at all. Instead, the journalist gloated over how impressed the congressmen were with Knoxville and its residents.[108]

Plans for the National Conservation Exposition began even before the 1911 Appalachian Exposition. In July of that year, members of the Knoxville Commercial Club met to create a promotion board to send to Washington D.C. Their objective was to organize a National Advisory Board made up of prominent national figures "which would give authoritativeness to the project."[109] The National Advisory board was established early in 1912, with Gifford Pinchot, then president of the National Conservation Association, appointed chairman. Members of the promotion board then made contact with leaders of other cities, including Atlanta, that were interested in competing for the national

[107] Jesse S. Cottrell, "Congressmen Singing Knoxville's Praises." *The Knoxville Sentinel*. 8 October 1913, 14.

[108] Ibid.

[109] T.A. Wright, "The Knoxville Expositions," in *The First Exposition of Conservation and its Builders*, William M. Goodman, ed. (Knoxville: The Knoxville Press, 1914), 42.

exposition. Competition would obviously make the event more legitimate and the host city, more prestigious.[110]

But the process of site selection for the exposition was never a contest amongst cities as it was presented. When the promotion board from Knoxville proposed a set of conditions to be met by the host city, which were approved by the National Advisory Board, they were Knoxville-specific conditions, such as raising more buildings at Chilhowee Park and not having an Appalachian Exposition in 1912. The first step, however, was the raising of a $100,000 promotion fund from the city of Knoxville to show a commitment to the exposition. When this condition was quickly met, Knoxville became the legitimate host of the event.[111] No other cities were really ever given a chance.

The matter of financing the event became a debated issue from the start. Initially, the promotion board sought money from the federal and state governments, including money from other states to fund the new Southern State building. The national government immediately rejected requests for federal aid and no other states contributed funds. The $25,000 sought from the state of Tennessee was approved but later declared unconstitutional by the attorney general, who said that the National Conservation Exposition "is the same as any local fair in Tennessee, as far as the state interest is concerned."[112] Government officials outside of Knoxville did not share the same vision as William M. Goodman and other Knoxvillians, and the event ended up being funded mostly by stockholders. Tennessee county courts contributed some money for the East Tennessee building; two-thirds of that financing came from Knox County.[113]

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[110] Ibid., 43.

[111] Ibid., 54, 63; "Men Foremost in Creating 1913 Exposition," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, National Conservation Exposition Edition, 27 August 1913, 14

[112] Ibid., 58, 73; "Exposition Not Get State's $25,000," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 8 October 1913, 5.

[113] Wright, "The Knoxville Expositions," 73, 74.

The upper social echelon of Knoxville appears to have provided the leadership of the exposition. William S. Shields initially acted as president of the National Conservation Exposition Company but resigned in the summer of 1912 due to business commitments. T. Asbury Wright, local attorney and member of the 1911 Appalachian Exposition Company's Board of Directors, replaced him. Wright, former mayor of Rockwood, Tennessee, came to Knoxville in 1908. By 1911, he was the senior member of the firm Wright and Jones. He was also involved in a number of mills and banking enterprises in East Tennessee.[114] Mrs. Horace Van Deventer was president of the Woman's Department at the fair. Sources mention little about Mrs. Van Deventer but information on her husband is abundant. Horace Van Deventer, graduate of Harvard Law School, served as city attorney of West Knoxville from 1895 to 1897 and State Senator from Knox County in 1901. A Spanish-American War veteran, Van Deventer was involved in a number of fraternal organizations and social clubs in Knoxville.[115] Dr. H.M. Green was chairman of the African American department for a third time.

The differences between the programs of each year demonstrates the attempt to change the scope of the third exposition. The cover of the *Premium List and Prospectus* for 1910 and 1911, as previously described, depicted a symbolic image of a man and a woman gazing upon the New South future of Knoxville.[116] The 1913 National Conservation Exposition *Premium List* cover contains a picture of a fertile farmland and rolling hills, presumably an area that had adopted conservationist techniques (see Figure 2). Although there is evidence of humanity in the houses, barn, fences, and roads, there are no

[114] Goodman. *The First Exposition of Conservation*, 74; Alice L. Howell, "Prominent Knoxvillians," 623, 624; *Men of Affairs in Knoxville, 1917*, 151.
[115] *Who's Who in Tennessee*. 235.
[116] *Appalachian Exposition Premium List and Prospectus* (c1910, c1911), front covers of both.

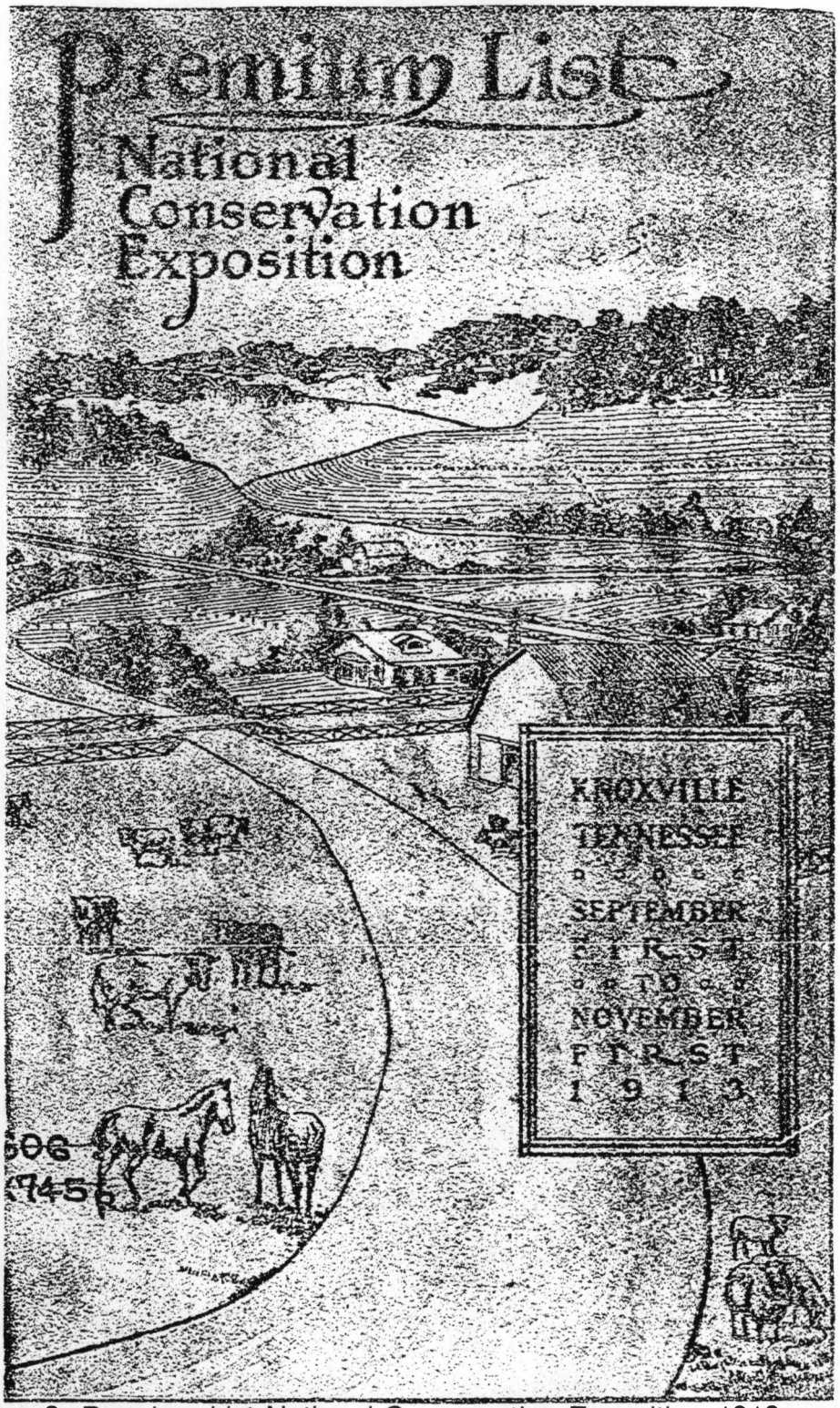

Figure 2. *Premium List National Conservation Exposition*, 1913, cover. Special Collections, University of Tennessee Hoskins Library, Knoxville, T

Figure 3. Postcards from the 1910 Appalachian Exposition. (top) Farragut Cabin (bottom) Main Building and dirigible balloon. McClung Collection, Lawson McGhee Library, Knoxville, TN.

Figure 4. African American Building at the National Conservation Exposition. The same building was used in the two Appalachian Expositions. The Beck Cultural Center, Knoxville, TN.

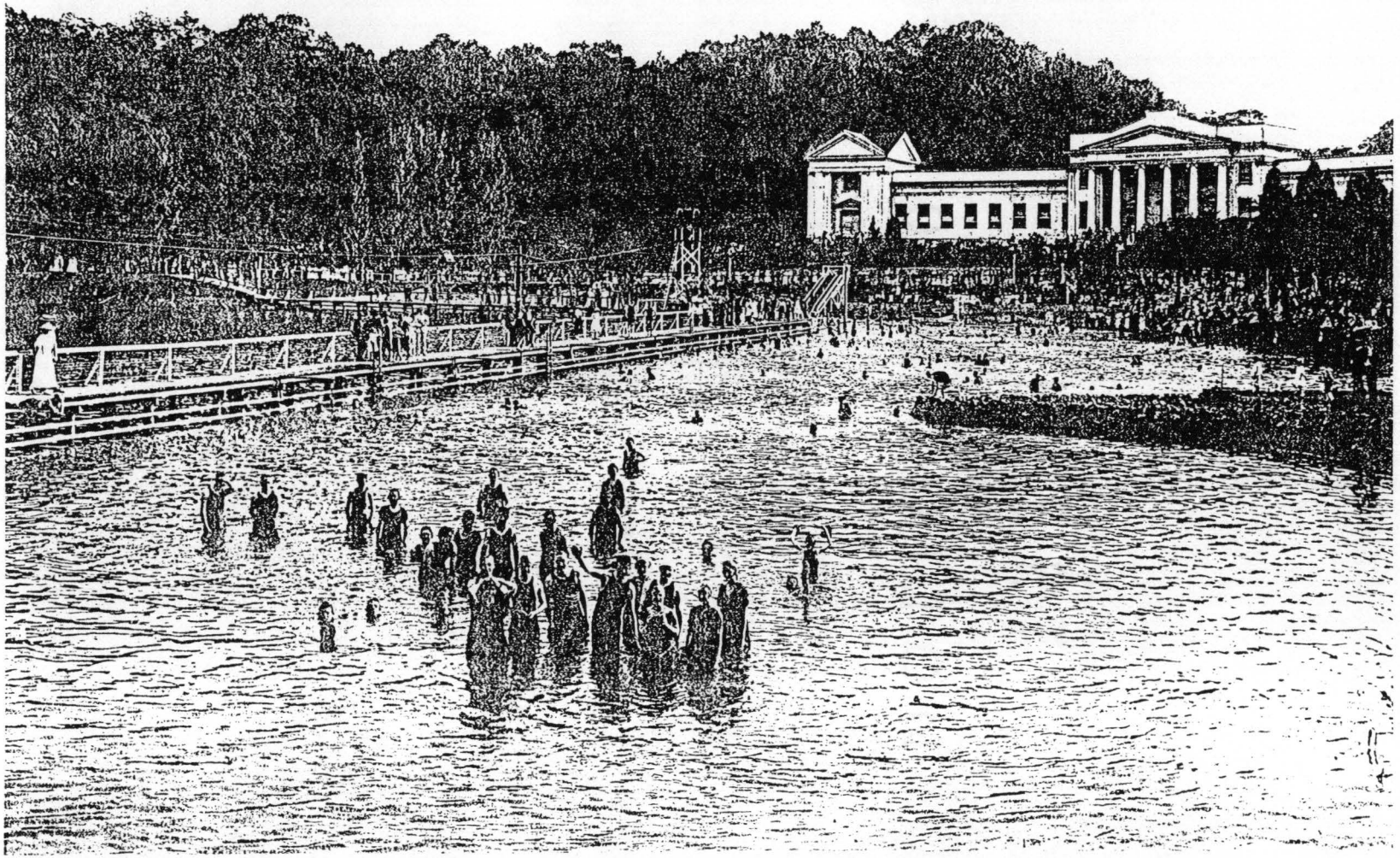

Figure 5. Swimming in the spring-fed lake at Chilhowee Park with the Southern States Building in the background, National Conservation Exposition, 1913. McClung Collection, Lawson McGhee Library, Knoxville, TN.

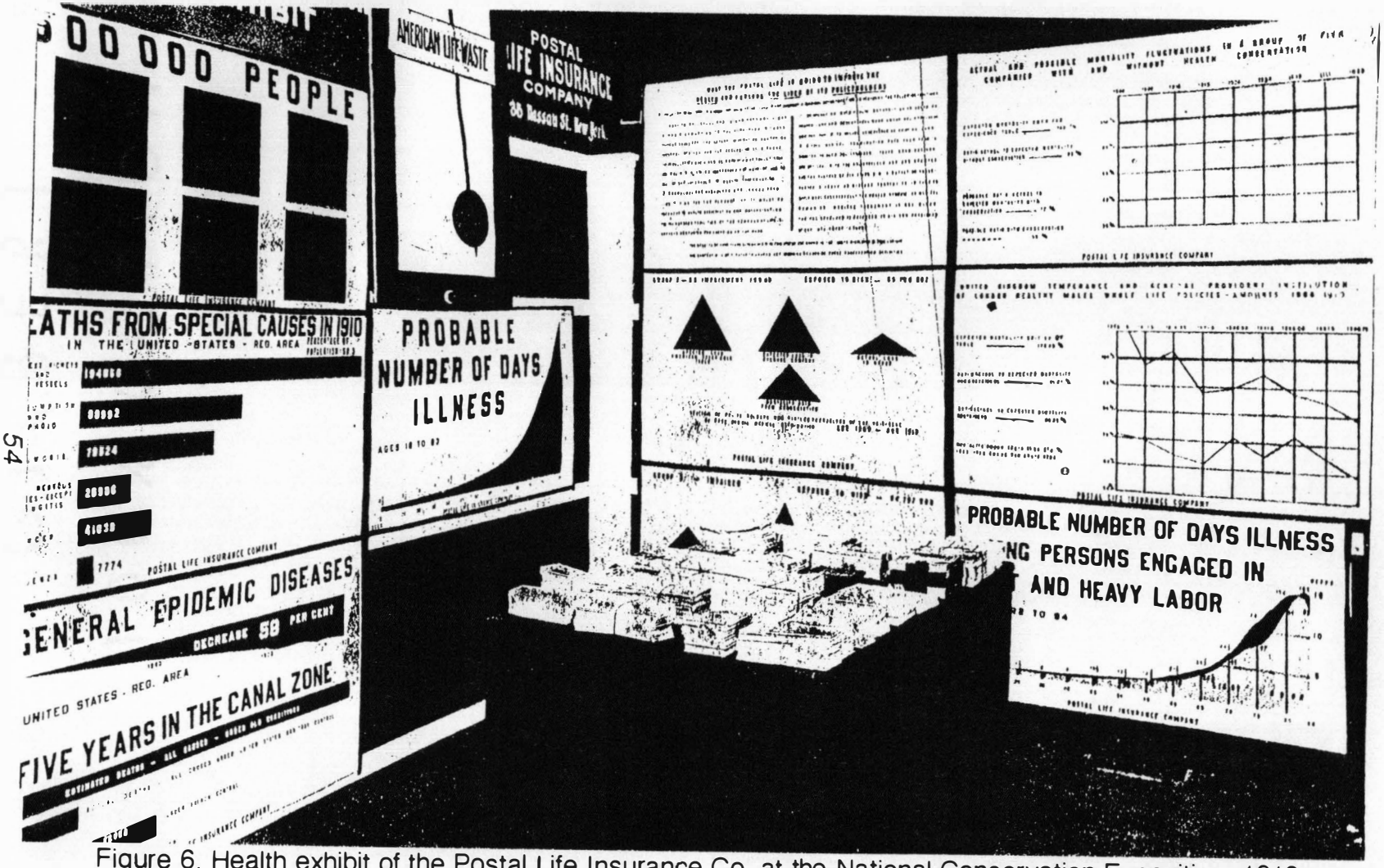

Figure 6. Health exhibit of the Postal Life Insurance Co. at the National Conservation Exposition, 1913. Goodman, *The First Exposition of Conservation and its Builders*, 246.

A NEEDED REMEDY

Figure 7. "A Needed Remedy," cartoon shows Knoxville's role in the conservation crusade. *The Journal and Tribune*, 3 September 1913, 1.

people in the picture. More significantly, it does not represent any specific tract of land as the picture on the 1910 and 1911 program did.[117]

To fully understand the discrepancy between the expressed purposes of the National Conservation Exposition and the reality of what it was, one must look at an original quote from the *Premium List*::

> The purposes of the National Conservation Exposition go beyond the promotion of mere development. Its special efforts will be directed toward making the development permanent, and toward turning the natural riches of the country into perpetual sources of wealth. It will illustrate the ways in which the resources of forests, waters, minerals, wild animal life and human efficiency may be more effectively utilized; How modern machinery lightens and increases production; How many things that now go to waste may be converted into sources of revenue.[118]

As the first sentence mentions, the exposition was not intended to promote just economic development. But this is what it became. It was a plea to the outside world for money, new residents, and publicity. Consequently, the National Conservation Exposition's exhibits and oratory continued to preach New South ideals to make the city and region more appealing to the outside world.

The exposition formally opened on the morning of Monday, September 2 with a wireless message from President Woodrow Wilson. Much of the fairgrounds remained the same as they were at the previous expositions. Yet even though the degree of continuity between the messages of the Appalachian Expositions and the National Conservation Exposition was obvious, it would be a mistake to assume that there were no important differences. Orators and displays promoted conservation, in the traditional sense of responsible exploitation of natural resources, with more vigor. Media coverage contained a greater proportion of articles concerning the ores, minerals, forests, soil, and livestock of the area than during the previous

[117] *Premium List-National Conservation Exposition* (Knoxville: S.P. Newman & Co. Printers and Binders, c1913), front cover.

[118] Ibid., 4.

expositions. More speeches focused on conservation. But although more was said about the subject, the same things were being said. For instance, the same exhibit used in 1910 and 1911 was used to demonstrate the effects of erosion and deforestation in 1913: two miniature hills placed side by side, one badly eroded and the other green and flourishing.[119] Whereas in 1910 and 1911 visiting speakers made a point to talk of the "progress" of the South, in 1913 the universal watchword was "conservation".

Perhaps the most significant addition to the National Conservation Exposition was the Child's Welfare Building. And it was no small addition. The only article which appeared in a national periodical other than newspapers on any of the expositions dealt with the Child's Welfare Building of the 1913 exposition.[120] The purpose of this department was to inform parents about the proper way to raise and care for their children. The main assumption of those who promoted children's welfare was that science had to take over where nature was inadequate. "Vital statistics..." noted the local newspapers, "have shown that too many children die in early infancy."[121] At the exhibit, a lighted star reminded visitors of this danger by going out "each time a baby died."[122] The promoters of this building believed that through photographs, lectures, and displays, the problem of high infant mortality could be solved. This was, of course, perceived to be particularly important in rural southern Appalachia.

But the concept of child's welfare went well beyond merely saving lives. Free of charge, parents could bring their children to see Dr. Frances Sage Bradley, a physician from Atlanta, to have their son or daughter properly

[119] "Natural Riches, Human and Animal Life Saved," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, National Conservation Exposition Edition, 27 August 1913, no page number.

[120] Frances S. Bradley, "Children's Health Conference, New Effort for Better Babies," *The Survey*, 15 November 1913, 178-179.

[121] "Practical Side of the Exposition," *The Journal and Tribune*, 3 September 1913, 10; "Century of the Child," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 5 September 1913, 4.

[122] Bradley, "Children's Health Conference," 179.

inspected. The purpose of this service was to point out any defects or basic abnormalities that the child might have and suggest a remedy. One couple, described as fairly affluent, was shocked to discover that "they had entirely overlooked the faulty articulation of a foot, due probably to their parental pride in his precocious stunts."[123] Therefore, Dr. Bradley and the entire Child's Welfare Department played their part in creating a more uniform society free of any abnormal children, an advancement which would benefit future generations of Americans. Like the emphasis put on the "pure" bloodline of Appalachian dwellers, this concern with children's health was related to the popular Social Darwinism and eugenics movements which attempted to perfect humanity through controlled reproduction.

Concern with the health and normality of children was part of a general rise in health consciousness and disease prevention. Under the title "conservation of life", this movement was based on an obsession with sanitation, fresh air, and spring water. On "Public Health Day," Dr. J. W. Trask warned listeners that lack of sanitation could place them in grave danger the next time they visited their barber shop, rode on the train, or came into contact with their servants.[124] Similarly, Miss Mabel Boardman of the American Red Cross Society proclaimed that her organization was responsible for the "conservation of human life in time of war."[125]

"Conservation" of human life was but one example of the manipulation of the word conservation to seem in vogue and gain recognition for one's cause. The use of the word by religious leaders was one of the most striking examples of this tendency. On one Sunday alone, there were three separate homilies given by local pastors who concocted the following sermon titles:

[123] Ibid.
[124] "Preached Sermon on Conservation of Life," *The Journal and Tribune*, 26 October 1913, 9.
[125] "Red Cross Societies Part in Conservation," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 19 September 1913, 1.

"Conservation of Spiritual Forces", "The National Conservation Exposition", and "Will the National Conservation Exposition Help Conserve the City's Moral Resources?"[126] But for the Reverend LeRoy G. Henderson, the important thing was "the conservation that counts for this life and the life to come" because "in the exposition of God hereafter how much more shall there be to interest and delight and feast upon" than at the National Conservation Exposition.[127]

If conservation could be used to save souls it could also be used to sell beer. At least one brewery, Wiedemann's Beer, had this idea. Through circumlocutory reasoning, advertisers of this product began with the premise that conservation "means the intelligent use of the good things which Nature has provided." From there, potential consumers were beckoned to a product which was pure, clean, and easily digested, "even by the digestive organs of an invalid."[128] Like using natural resources, potential customers were asked to drink with careful moderation.

This whole expansion of the meaning of the word conservation can be traced to a rise in interest among middle class Americans between the years 1908 and 1910. Organizations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution and the General Federation of Women's Clubs rallied behind the conservationist message and preached it at their meetings. But these and other groups saw conservation as a solution not to the depletion of the nation's natural resources, but to the depletion of American morals which were damaged by the greed and materialism of modern industrialism. Ideologically, these new supporters were closely allied with the preservationist strain of conservation: saving natural areas not for their utility but for their aesthetic and

[126] "Lessons from the Exposition," *The Journal and Tribune*. 7 September 1913, 6.
[127] LeRoy G. Henderson, "Conservation that Counts," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 27 September 1913, 10.
[128] Ad for Wiedemann's Beer, *The Journal and Tribune*. National Conservation Number, 23 September 1913. no page number.

inspirational virtues. Although these preservationist and moral conservationist beliefs had little to do with Pinchot's and Roosevelt's agenda, they had little choice but to accept misguided support over no support at all.[129]

In Knoxville, this same distorted yet accepted strain of conservationist thought was extant in the form of the city beautiful movement. Under the direction of the Park Association, the Knoxville city beautiful movement worked to improve the appearance of the city. Citizens were encouraged to plant flowers and trees, improve vacant property, and "report any unsightly objects in your neighborhood."[130] The expressed purpose of urban betterment was to make the city of Knoxville "healthy and pleasant to live in."[131]

The betterment of Knoxville's appearance was only part of the agenda of the Woman's Building at the National Conservation Exposition. The general goal of the women's exhibit was to teach women "how to conserve home, health, and happiness."[132] The tactics for accomplishing this were strikingly similar to those used in the previous expositions. Hand-made arts and crafts items, "relics marking the progress of America," the Southern Library, and the model home display were all used to conserve home, health, and happiness.[133] One exhibit, the World's Progress in Weaving Committee, demonstrated technological progress in weaving by contrasting Navaho, mountaineer, and "modern" methods.[134] Moreover, special days held in conjunction with the Woman's Department, such as Club Day and Home Maker's Day, attracted orators and visitors interested in such topics. But women were by no means

[129]Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*, 142-145.

[130]Park Association (Knoxville), *Knoxville Tennessee: The City Beautiful, By-Laws of Civic Improvement Societies of the City of Knoxville, Tenn* (no publication information, 1908), 2.

[131] Ibid.

[132] "Conservation of Home, Health. Happiness," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, National Conservation Exposition Edition, 27 August 1913, no page number.

[133] Ibid.

[134] *Premium List National Conservation Exposition*, 67

unaware of the importance of conservation of natural resources. At one local women's club meeting during the exposition, Mrs. Ross Mead Cawood and Mrs. B. A. Tripp read papers on soil conservation and insects' impact on agriculture, respectively.[135]

Although a majority of the tactics for employing New South ideals at this department remained the same from two years before, the participants were living in a slightly different milieu. By 1913, the issue of women's suffrage in Knoxville was no longer considered unmentionably radical. At this time, *The Knoxville Sentinel* ran a Saturday section entitled "Women's Enfranchisement" which preached suffrage and gave readers updates on developments in that area. There was no mention of the suffrage issue, besides noting the involvement of the local Equal Suffrage League, in any of the 1910 or 1911 exposition newspaper coverage. The only indication, albeit poignant, that there was any real interest in women's voting was the article written by Julia S. Lucky.

A lot had changed in two years. At the National Conservation Exposition, an unprecedented public debate was held over the issue between Mrs. L. Crozier French, founder of the Knoxville Equal Suffrage League, and Mrs. Annie Riley Hale, an anti-suffragist. Mrs. French based her argument on the inconsistencies of the U.S. government. Federal government preached democracy for all and both sexes paid equal taxes but women did not enjoy their right to vote. Furthermore, French argued, there were men at the polls who were much more incompetent than the majority of women. Mrs. Hale countered by asserting that the vote is a privilege to be earned, not an inherent right in this country. True, there may be some incompetent men voting, but two wrongs, the second being women's suffrage, do not equal one right. Finally, Hale appealed to the New South role of women as moral guardians; women can do more good

[135] "Continues Study of Conservation." *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 28 October 1913, 9

by instilling proper values in their children than by voting.[136] Women's suffrage was still considered radical in Knoxville in 1913, but whereas before it was nearly unmentionable, at the 1913 exposition it was fully debatable.

One interesting absence at the National Conservation Exposition was exhibits and newspaper coverage dealing with Appalachian highlanders. During the two months of the event, only one article mentioned the plight of the highlander which covered a speech by Mrs. Martha S. Gielow of the Southern Industrial Education Association. In her address, Mrs. Gielow praised the quality of craftsmanship and marketability of the highlanders' work. She also encouraged listeners to follow the lead of Mrs. Woodrow Wilson by decorating one room in the home with Appalachian products. Farragut's cabin, now "Farragut's Cottage", remained on the fairgrounds but became a cafe for the 1913 event.

The little attention given to highlanders at the 1913 fair indicates that there was a growing aloofness from their plight. Yet, mountain work continued to grow as a movement through the 1910s. Beginning in 1914, Knoxville became the permanent host of the Conference of Mountain Workers, a meeting of Appalachian reform leaders.[137] So why was there less attention given to the topic at the 1913 exposition? It is probable that, in trying to project a progressive image to the rest of the nation, a perceived regional blight such as Appalachian "otherness" was downplayed.

The African American Department at the National Conservation Exposition continued preaching a Washingtonian role for New South blacks. The majority of the "Negro" Building was filled with items such as dressmaking, needlework, and canning products from the women, and wagons, plows and

[136] "Women Meet in Debate unique in Annals of Public Speaking," *The Journal and Tribune*, 17 October 1913, 10.

[137] Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, 186-196.

brooms from the men. In agriculture, the black department contained a model home garden tended by children. Examples of exceptional crops grown by adults were rewarded with cash prizes. The hospitalization facilities housed a child welfare exhibit so that blacks could have their babies inspected like the white visitors. Still, blacks were encouraged to remain separate from whites in the vicinity of their department, "which will be the headquarters for the colored visitors at the exposition."[138]

There was, however, a new emphasis on the schooling of African Americans at the 1913 fair. One article in *The Journal and Tribune* extolled an exhibit of the Tennessee Colored Agricultural and Industrial State Normal School which contained sewing, woodworking, and mechanical products from the school's pupils. Similarly, when Booker T. Washington visited the exposition, his speech consisted of nothing more than an explanation and endorsement of his school, the Tuskegee Institute, and a call for more schools of its nature. Not only did this demonstrate the progress of the black "race", but it served to allay the fears of whites who might have thought that African American education might be dangerous.[139]

Reactions to the exhibit by the local black community are once again sparse. The Knoxville College *Aurora*, however, contained a couple of articles which showed agreement with the exposition's message. One piece wholeheartedly agreed with the Child's Welfare exhibit's emphasis on children's health. Three years earlier, another journalist, R. D. Doggett, had used the example of the near-extinct buffalo to demonstrate the dangers of

[138] Hu G. Fagg, "Booker T. Washington Will Visit Exposition," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, National Conservation Exposition Edition, 27 August 1913, no page number; "Great Progress of the Negro Race," *The Journal and Tribune*, 2 September 1913, 3.

[139] "Exhibit of the Normal School," *The Journal and Tribune*, 12 October 1913. 10; "Over 2,000 Students in Tuskegee Institute," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 14 October 1913. 10

myopic resource management and the benefits of conservation.[140] Once again, there seems to be little difference between the reaction to the fair and its issues from part of the local middle-class black community and the white community of Knoxville.

The National Conservation Exposition was used to promote certain ideals, but the fair was also used and perceived by the local populace as a simple advertisement for the region and city. On September 22, 1913 *The Journal and Tribune* published its 66 page "National Conservation Number" rivaling the "National Conservation Exposition Edition" of *The Knoxville Sentinel*. This special edition essentially attempted to sell Knoxville to visitors by posting articles such as "Some of Knoxville's Modern Office Buildings," "Knoxville Has Thirty Miles of Paved Street," and "East Tennessee Offers Alluring Opportunities to Home Seekers." Of course, conservation was covered in articles including "Tennessee's Unparalleled Resources," and "Hydroelectric Development in East Tennessee Promises Wonders." Further evidence of this function of the exposition was found at the event itself. Although there was little media coverage of the event, October 23 and 24 were declared Real Estate Days for promotion of investments from abroad in that area. Thus, not only was the National Conservation Exposition used to promote progressive New South agendas, but it was also overtly used to advertise Knoxville and the immediate vicinity.

In conclusion, even though the purpose of the National Conservation Exposition was to promote responsible and efficient resource exploitation and teach visitors about "how many things that now go to waste may now be converted into sources of revenue," the exposition meant different things to

[140] Mary E. Bond and Ora Nall, "A Child's Welfare Exhibit," *The Aurora* (Knoxville College Publication) 28, no. 1, (October, 1913), 13-15; R. D. Doggett, "The Conservation of Our Natural Resources," *The Aurora* 24, no. 6 (March, 1910): 1-3.

different people.[141] A handful saw it as a warning cry to conserve the nation's resources. Many others saw it as a way to promote their own agendas, usually local, whether it was religion, homemaking, or beer selling. These people may not have had any understanding of the true conservationist's cause, but they used the term conservation simply because everybody else was, it got people's attention, and it made people feel good to use a word associated with public welfare. Although the National Conservation Exposition took place in a slightly different milieu and had different intentions behind it than its predecessors, the New South boosterism applied to Southern Appalachia remained.

[141] *Premium List - National Conservation Exposition*, 4.

Conclusion: "A Splendid and Progressive City"?

The three expositions of Knoxville were used as a medium through which progressive New South ideas about the way society should be were presented. In 1910 and 1911, conservatism and resistance to change were attacked through the ideology of conservation and the further government intervention in local business affairs it entailed. Appalachian highlanders were viewed as a group of people with the potential to contribute to regional growth. Both women and blacks had important roles in the New South dream. Although separate from the rest of the fairs, both perceived their departments as boosts to their collective identity. But beneath the messages of the events, the 1911 fair seemed slightly more conservative than its predecessor. Perhaps the local elite took over the event to reap benefits from it and ensure that it did not undermine their social standing. The 1913 National Conservation Exposition was supposed to be a national affair teaching the doctrine of conservation to visitors from across the country. With a few changes, however, the function of the 1913 fair remained the same as its forerunners: to make the New South dream a reality in the southern Appalachian region.

On July 28, 1916, almost three years after the National Conservation Exposition, a figure known as the "Prophet of the Great Smokies" paid a visit to

a community picnic at Chilhowee Park. The result of the last two decades of industry and determination, the prophet proclaimed, was the creation of "a splendid and progressive city" full of churches, business buildings, good roads, railways, and buzzing market places.[142] The prophet had a prediction for the future of Knoxville as well. Listing the names of many prominent people in the city, he claimed that these and other citizens contained the entrepreneurial spirit which would make Knoxville the "Golconda of the earth" and "center of culture, progress and prosperity."[143] At this picnic, the prophet of the Great Smokies echoed the messages of three expositions of that same decade.

But did Knoxville really become the "splendid and progressive city" which the founders of the expositions hoped for? One can assess the results of the three expositions on two different levels. The first level deals with the more immediate effects of the expositions: profitability, popularity, publicity, and a general correspondence with the specific goals of the fairs. The second level deals with the achievement of the ultimate long term goal of the fairs' message and what the prophet saw in Knoxville's future: the development of a metropolis unsurpassed in business, commerce, and industry; in other words, the creation of the model New South city and region.

The immediate results are somewhat difficult to evaluate due to the paucity of evidence. The progressive press and boosters of Knoxville tended to focus more on the next big event than dwell on past achievements or failures. Yet there are pieces of evidence that have remained which, when put together, give some indication of what the results were of the efforts behind the fairs.

There is no doubt that the local press and the main organizers of each fair saw them as successful. Local newspapers were convinced of this months

[142] "Knoxville Felicitated by Prophet; His Forecast of the City's Future; Its Accomplishments are Recounted," *The Knoxville Sentinel*. 28 July 1916, no page number found.

[143] Ibid.

before the first Appalachian Exposition opened its gates. In 1911 and 1913, the preceding fairs were lauded as successful ventures. William M. Goodman, one of the few to play an important role in all three of the expositions, dedicated nearly 400 pages of text to the National Conservation Exposition in *The First Exposition of Conservation and Its Builders*. In this book he and other contributors saw the three expositions, especially the last, as a watershed representing a new type of exposition which focused on promoting a better future instead of celebrating past achievements.[144]

But were these expositions unique? The first chapter of this inquiry contends that the fairs attempted to reconcile racial, economic, and cultural problems in the region. But these fairs had counterparts in other southern cities vying for New South status. In his description of turn-of-the-century expositions in New Orleans, Atlanta, and Nashville, Robert Rydell asserts that "each exposition conveyed the message that the prosperity of the country as a whole was contingent upon economic development of the South, especially of its natural resources..."[145] Similarly, two studies of the Charleston, South Carolina Interstate and West Indian Exposition of 1901 and 1902 suggest that there were striking similarities between the messages of the Women's and Black Departments of those expositions and the three Knoxville expositions.[146] Thus, these expositions were not, as Goodman claimed, the first to look forward instead of backward. Progressive expositions were by nature forward looking. What Goodman perceived as celebrations of the past were usually juxtapositions of old achievements with present developments. It was not the

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[144] Goodman, *The First Exposition of Conservation and Its Builders*, 9.

[145] Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 73.

[146] William D. Smyth, "Blacks and the South Carolina Interstate and West Indian Exposition." *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 88, no. 4 (1987): 211-219; Sidney R. Bland, "Women and World's Fairs: The Charleston Story," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 94. no.3 (1993): 166-184.

structure, nature, or messages of the Knoxville fairs but the use of the exposition as a medium to apply New South ideals to southern Appalachia which made them unique and innovative.

The short-term benefits of the expositions should not be overlooked. As financial ventures, at least the first two expositions were certainly successful. The 1910 exposition, it was estimated, drew a 140 percent return on the $100,000 invested by Appalachian Exposition Company Stockholders. Immediately following the 1910 fair, the Appalachian Exposition Company increased its stock from $100,000 to $250,000, which indicates a great deal of faith in the next year's success.[147] The mere fact that the two Appalachian Expositions paved the way for the National Conservation Exposition, a grand finale of sorts, is evidence of the success felt in years before. No such hard figures are available for the 1913 exposition. Yet at least the Woman's Department was a success. For their department, the cafe in the "Farragut Cottage" earned $1,800 in profits and a house-boat cafe at the exposition also made a hefty profit.[148] One other significant result of the fairs was the improvement of the city's infrastructure to accommodate the onslaught of visitors traveling by automobile.

Another way to measure the success of the fairs is by examining the newspaper coverage outside of the local press. The founders of each event relied upon nationwide publicity to attract attention to Knoxville and its hinterland. An assessment of a number of newspapers from *The Atlanta Constitution* to *The New York Times* indicates that there was coverage of the expositions in major cities hundreds of miles from Knoxville. As one would

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[147] "Unprecedented Financial Success of the Exposition," *The Evening World* (Knoxville), 15 October 1910, 3; "Appalachian Exposition Increases Capital Stock," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, 1 November 1910, 9.

[148] "Women's Board Closes Book," 8 November 1913, *The Journal and Tribune*, 9.

expect, coverage became more sparse and less celebratory the further north one went. For instance, *The Atlanta Constitution* had a total of five full-length articles on the three expositions while the Baltimore *Sun* contained only one article which dealt with the 1911 fair. Also, two southern African American newspapers, *The Nashville Globe* and *The Richmond Planet*., both carried advertisements for the exposition. Therefore, the expositions did, as was hoped, draw attention from the entire South and eastern seaboard.[149]

Yet how many of those who lived far away from Knoxville actually came to visit the expositions? Local press coverage of the expositions frequently took notice of visitors from afar, like Los Angelena Cynthia Linden Sterling. Similarly, the 1911 Appalachian Exposition *Premium List and Prospectus* claimed that its predecessor drew visitors from all of the states in the Union and also Mexico and Canada. Unfortunately, it is impossible to check the veracity of such statements for any of the three fairs. Yet one vital remnant of the 1911 exposition gives an idea of the composition of the exposition visitor population. The 1911 Appalachian Exposition *Guest Book* of the library exhibit contains 482 entries that include names, places of residence, and general comments. Two hundred and five of those entries were from Knoxville. Almost 200 of those visitors from outside of Knoxville were from nearby areas of Tennessee. The

[149] *The Baltimore Sun*, September 12-13, October 7-8, 12-13, 1910, September 11-12, 27-28, 1911, September 1-2, 1913; *The Commercial Appeal* (Memphis, TN), September 12-13, October 7-8, 1910, September 11-12, 27-28, 1911, September 1913; *The Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), September, October 7-8, 12-13, 1910, September 11-12, 27-28, 1911, September, 1913; *The Nashville American*, September, 1910, September 12-13, 1911, September 1-2, 1913; *The Nashville Globe*, September 12-13, October 7-8, 12-13, 1910, September 11-12, 27-28, 1911, September 1-3, 1913; *The New York Times*, September 12-13, October 7-8, 12-13, 1910, September 11-12, 27-28, 1911, September 1-2, 1913; *The New York Tribune*, September 12-13, October 7-8, 12-13, 1910, September 11-12, 27-28, 1911, September 1-2, 1913; *The Philadelphia Bulletin* and *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, PA), September 12-13, October 7-8, October 12-13, 1910; *The Richmond Planet* (Richmond, VA), September, October, 1910, 1911, August, September, October, 1913; *The Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.), September 12-13, October 7-8, 12-13, 1910, September 11-12, 27-28, 1911, September 1-3, 1913.

remaining 79 visitors were mostly from southern states, with a few from the Midwest and East.[150] Therefore, if this is any indication of the origins of the three expositions' visitors, it clearly demonstrates that the fairs failed to draw many from across the nation. Instead, the majority of visitors were from Knoxville and nearby areas of Tennessee.

Despite the apparently restricted regional composition of the expositions' visitors, the events seem to have been successful short-term ventures. Publicity, profitability, and an enthusiastic local populace all attested to the beneficial effects of the fairs. The ultimate purpose of each fair, however, as expressed by exposition founders, ran much deeper than these superficial accomplishments. Did Knoxville and the surrounding area realize its dream of New South status as exhibited by each of these expositions?

The decade following the expositions did not fulfill the hopes for progress embodied in the expositions. Social and economic polarization deepened and the suspicion of big business and resistance to change persisted among the working class. Unsettled race relations in Knoxville led to race riots in 1919 and the resurgence of local Ku Klux Klan activities. As Michael McDonald and William Bruce Wheeler note about Knoxville by 1920, "economically, socially and politically, the city was divided into mutually hostile and suspicious camps of the conservative business elite, Appalachian whites, blacks, insulated university faculty, and a comparatively small middle class."[151] The city continued to be plagued by conservatism, even into the later third of the twentieth century. Through the 1960s and 1970s, the business elite still preferred to retain Knoxville's idyllic semi-rural atmosphere over modernization and

[150] Ella Seass Stewart, comp., *Guest Book* of the 1911 Appalachian Exposition Library Exhibit (NY: Dodge Publishing Company, 1903).

[151] McDonald and Wheeler, *Knoxville, Tennessee*, 44, 58. 60.

cosmopolitanism.[152]

The creation of a comprehensive conservation program in the Southern Appalachian region was not realized in the first third of this century. The preservationist Weeks Act, passed in 1911 to establish an Appalachian Forest Reserve, was the closest attempt at this. But one could plausibly argue that Pinchot's dream of a multipurpose water system of hydroelectric power, navigation, irrigation, and flood control was indeed realized in the projects of the Tennessee Valley Authority under the New Deal.

In the years immediately following the National Conservation Exposition, the city began to petition for munitions plants in preparation for the entrance of the U.S. into a World War. One pamphlet published in 1916 described Knoxville as "a natural fortress", the ideal place for munitions manufacturing because it was in the "exact center of the eastern part of the United States" and therefore more safe than New York or St. Louis.[153] The hyperbolic rhetoric continued as this pamphlet used a direct quote from the Bible, Deuteronomy 8:8, to describe Knoxville as Moses described the promised land of Canaan. War distracted Knoxville's progressives from their New South goals. Not only did feelings of nationalism replace sectional allegiances, but the desire to host munitions plants and meet the exigencies of war replaced the desire to exploit the resources of the area on a long term scale.

Expositions continued to mark the calendar each autumn in the "Queen City of the Mountains." In 1914, the National Conservation Exposition, conceived of as an annual event, was reduced to a meager Labor Day picnic at Chilhowee Park. In 1915, the first East Tennessee Fair was established at the fairgrounds with similar boosterism but on a smaller scale than its forerunners.

[152] Ibid., 134.

[153] Knoxville Board of Commerce, *Knoxville, Tennessee: The Natural Resources of East Tennessee of Which Knoxville is the Center*... (no publication information, 1917).

Since then, the city has hosted expositions and fairs annually. And, of course, Knoxville hosted the 1982 World's Fair, which civic leaders saw once again as a source of economic salvation. But the trend was established nearly a century ago. Logically, if the expositions were completely successful they would eliminate the need for expositions in the future. But, although expositions in Knoxville have continually been perceived as great boosts to the community in many different ways, they have done little more than act as quick money making ventures and convivial community events, not unlike carnivals. Therefore, the Appalachian Expositions and National Conservation Exposition provided a valuable lesson ignored by later city leaders: don't count on expositions for miracles.

William J. Oliver was undoubtedly the most dynamic, progressive businessman in Knoxville during the three expositions. An examination of the rest of his life mirrors the bleak fate of New South Progressivism in Knoxville during the first third of the twentieth century. Following the 1910 fair, Oliver was reportedly accused of and later admitted to having a private bar for himself and his friends on the "dry" fairgrounds.[154] From 1911 to 1921 his occupation listed in *City Directories* varied: president of the William J. Oliver Manufacturing Company and the William J. Oliver Plow Company, and a railroad contractor. In 1919, his own Knoxville, Sevierville and East Railroad Company folded. In 1920, Oliver was tried and later exonerated on charges of the wartime manufacturing of allegedly defective shells.[155] By 1921, the other two companies were still listed but Oliver was no longer the president of either. Finally, in 1924 his name disappeared from the directory, yet his wife's name

[154] "Wicked Fellows the Expo Directors Thinks Mr. T.L. Carty," *The Evening World*, 25 October 1910, 1.

[155] "Efforts to Speed Up Trial of Oliver et al Sabotage Charges," *The Journal and Tribune*, 18 February 1920, 12; "Oliver Exonerated; Judge McCall Directs Verdict for Defense," *The Journal and Tribune*, 24 February 1920, 1.

remained listed even though he did not die until 1925.[156] Thus, like the city of Knoxville, Oliver's visions of New South grandeur were never realized.

[156] Howell, "Prominent Knoxvillians," 590; *Directory of Knoxville, TN* (1910-1917, 1920-1925).

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Vita

Robert Lukens was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on November 8, 1972. After attending a public elementary school, he enrolled at and eventually graduated from Delaware County Christian School in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania. In September of 1990, Robert began his freshmen year at Grove City College in Grove City, Pennsylvania. Disillusioned with the small college atmosphere, he returned to the Philadelphia area to receive his Bachelor of Arts in History from Temple University in August of 1994. Robert then entered the Master's program in History at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. While attending school, he pursued interests in public history through work at two different museums: the McClung Museum of the University of Tennessee and, during the summers, the Chester County Historical Society in West Chester, Pennsylvania. His Master of Arts degree was received in May, 1996. Next, Robert will either attend another university as a Ph.D. candidate or begin teaching at a community or junior college.